

Holes

by Louis Sachar

1999 Newbery Medal Winner

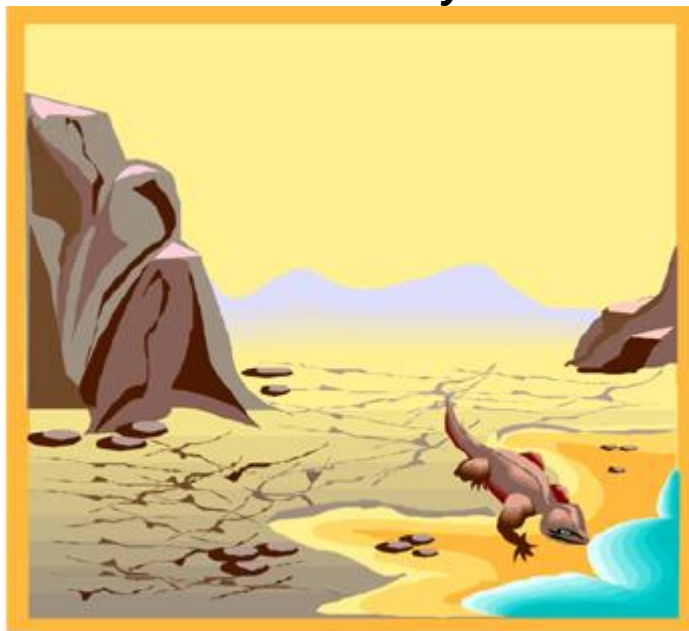
Chapter Summaries
Prereading Activities
Vocabulary

Short Answer Questions

Objective Tests (Chapter-by-Chapter and Whole Book)

Think, Write, Create Activities
(Chapter-by-Chapter and Whole Book)

Graphic Organizers for Writing
and
Answer Keys



A Novel Teaching Pack

by Margaret Whisnant

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Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

- Camp Green Lake is in Texas. There is no lake.
- The largest lake in Texas used to be located at the town of Green Lake. The town, like the lake, no longer exists.
- Daytime temperatures reach ninety-five degrees in the shade on the dry lake. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and yellow-spotted lizards live there.
- The hammock stretched between the only two old oak trees on the edge of the dry lake belongs to the warden.
- Being bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard is a certain slow and painful death.

Chapter 2

- Camp Green Lake is for bad boys, and they must dig a hole every day in the hot sun.
- Stanley Yelnats chooses Camp Green Lake over jail because he is from a poor family and has never been to camp.

Chapter 3

- A handcuffed Stanley Yelnats, the only passenger on the bus to Camp Green Lake, doesn't have any friends, is overweight, and is taunted at his middle school.
- Stanley is innocent of the crime for which he has been convicted.
- The family joke is to blame everything on Stanley's no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather. Years before he stole a pig from a one-legged Gypsy and got a curse put on him and all his descendants.
- Stanley's father is an inventor, currently trying to find a use for old sneakers, but he never has any luck.
- Everyone in the family has always liked the fact that *Stanley Yelnats* is spelled the same frontward and backward. Our Stanley is Stanley Yelnats IV.
- In spite of their bad luck, every Stanley Yelnats has remained hopeful.
- The first Stanley Yelnats makes a fortune in the stock market. He loses it all moving from New York to California when his stagecoach is robbed by the outlaw Kissin' Kate Barlow, and he is left stranded in the middle of the desert.

Chapter 4

- Stanley meets a man who introduces himself as Mr. Sir. He is eating sunflower seeds because he has quit smoking.
- Mr. Sir tells Stanley he isn't in the Girl Scouts anymore.
- Stanley receives two orange jumpsuits, two orange T-shirts, yellow socks, white sneakers, an orange cap, and a canteen.
- Stanley is to dig one hole each day, five feet deep and five feet across in every direction, measured by his shovel.
- Breakfast is served at 4:30 so the holes can be dug before the hottest part of the day.
- Mr. Sir says Stanley is to report anything interesting he digs up to him or another counselor.
- There are no fences or guards at Camp Green Lake because nobody runs away from the only water for a hundred miles.
- Mr. Sir says Stanley should get used to being thirsty, since that's how he is going to be for the next eighteen months.

Chapter 5

- Stanley's counselor, Mr. Pendanski, tells him the one rule at Camp Green Lake is *Don't upset the Warden*.
- Mr. Pendanski declares his respect for Stanley and his intent to help him turn his life around.
- Stanley learns that he will be sleeping in a cot that belonged to a camper called Barf Bag, who is in the hospital and won't be returning.

Word Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in Story Order)
(Some words appear on multiple pages.)

Set 1: Chapter 1-Chapter 31

- gruff** Hoarse; harsh; brusque in manner or appearance. (p. 8)
- descendants** All of the offspring of a given ancestor; people, animals, or plants whose ancestry can be traced to a particular individual or group. (p. 8)
- vast** Very great in area or extent; immense; great in size, amount, or quantity. (p. 8)
- perseverance** Steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose; steadfastness. (p. 8)
- befell** To come to pass; to happen. (p. 9)
- dazed** In a state of mental numbness, especially as resulting from shock; stunned or confused; slow to react. (p. 11)
- desolate** Devoid of inhabitants; deserted; barren; lifeless. (p. 11)
- violation** A disrespectful act; an act that disregards an agreement or a right; a crime less serious than a felony. (p. 12)
- premises** A tract of land with its component parts, such as buildings; a building or part of a building with surrounding grounds; land or buildings together considered as a place of business. (p. 12)
- scarcity** Insufficiency in amount or supply; shortage; rarity of appearance or occurrence. (p. 21)
- prospect** Something expected; a possibility. (p.22)
- retrieved** Gotten back; regained; rescued or saved. (p. 23)
- despicable** Deserving of contempt or scorn; vile (p. 25)
- souvenir** A token of remembrance; a memento. (p. 25))
- defective** Having a fault; faulty; imperfect or malformed. (p. 26)
- forlorn** Wretched or pitiful in appearance or condition; nearly hopeless; desperate (p. 30)
- eternity** Time without beginning or end; infinite time. (p. 31)
- deftly** Quickly and skillfully. (p. 32)
- excavated** Removed by digging or scooping out; made a hole in; hollowed out. (p. 34)
- preposterous** Contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; absurd. (p. 34)
- dawdle** To move aimlessly or lackadaisically; to take more time than is necessary. (p. 35)
- grimaced** Contorted the face in an expression of pain, contempt, or disgust. (p. 39)
- predatory** Living by preying on other organisms; of, related to, or characterized by plundering, pillaging, or marauding. (p. 42)
- scowled** Wrinkled or contracted the brow as an expression of anger or disapproval. (46)
- intensity** Exceptionally great concentration, power, force, energy, or feeling. (p. 47)
- shrugged** Raised the shoulders in a gesture of indifference, doubt, or disdain. (p. 52)
- appropriate** Suitable for a particular person, condition, or occasion; fitting. (p. 57)
- metallic** Containing metal; having the characteristics of metal. (p. 60)
- paranoid** Characterized by extreme or irrational fear or distrust of others. (p. 71)
- evict** To put out, a tenant for example, by legal process; expel; force out. (p. 75)
- condemned** Pronounced or proven guilty; officially and strongly disapproved; officially pronounced unfit for use or consumption. (p. 88)
- toxic** Poisonous; capable of causing injury or death, especially by chemical means. (p. 90)
- refuge** Protection or shelter, as from danger or hardship. (p. 93)
- defiance** Bold resistance to an opposing force or authority; readiness to resist or contend. (p. 96)
- incurable** Being such that a cure is impossible; incapable of being altered, as in disposition or habit. (p. 102)
- vile** Filthy, foul, or nasty; thoroughly unpleasant; appalling. (p. 118)
- blotchy** A discoloration of the skin; blemished. (p. 121)
- depriving** Denying; taking something away from; keeping from possessing or enjoying. (p. 131)

Dictionary Digs

Part One—Chapter 1-Chapter 31

Digging into a dictionary will guarantee finding correct answers to all the following questions about some words you will encounter as you read **Holes**. Use the blanks to the left to write the **letters** of the answers you unearth.

- _____ 1. What is another way to describe a **despicable** character?
(A) a contemptible character, (B) an intense character, (C) a desolate character
- _____ 2. If **refuge** is shelter from danger or hardship, then what is a **refugee**?
(A) a place such as a bomb shelter or a storm shelter, (B) a person or group who provides protection from danger, (C) a person fleeing to safety, such as from a war.
- _____ 3. Which of the following words is the *present tense* of **befell**?
(A) befall, (B) befallen, (C) befalling
- _____ 4. Is it OK to **dawdle** when you are on a tight schedule?
(A) Yes. *Dawdle* means to move quickly and efficiently. (B) No. There is no time to waste. (C) It doesn't matter. People who take breaks usually do better work.
- _____ 5. Which of the following places is most likely to be a **desolate** place?
(A) the Gobi Desert, (B) the moon's surface, (C) a drop of pond water
- _____ 6. An *antonym* for **depriving** is (A) indulging, (B) denying, (C) positioning.
- _____ 7. Which of the following is the correct definition of **vast**?
(A) a large container, especially for holding liquids, (B) very great in area, extent, size, or amount, (C) a rolling grassland region of South Africa
- _____ 8. Which sentence correctly illustrates the meaning of the word **shrugged**?
(A) She looked at the painting, **shrugged** her shoulders, and walked away.
(B) He **shrugged** the baseball farther than any other boy on the team.
(C) Many pioneers **shrugged** all their belongings on their westward trek.
- _____ 9. The word **gruff** would probably **not** be used to describe (A) the sound of someone's voice, (B) a person who is behaving in a stern manner, (C) the texture of a material such as tree bark or coral.
- _____ 10. A sign over an entryway that reads **No Smoking on the Premises** means (A) smoking is allowed inside building, but not on the outside (B) smoking is not allowed inside or outside the building. (C) smoking is allowed outside the building only.
- _____ 11. A synonym for **deftly** is (A) evenly, (B) absent mindedly, (C) skillfully.
- _____ 12. The word **condemned** can be an adjective (**condemned** property) or a verb (The city has **condemned** the property.) Which of the following is the **noun** form of **condemned**? The word means *the act of condemning or being condemned*?
(A) condemnable, (B) condemnation, (C) condemnatory
- _____ 13. What is another way to describe a person with **perseverance**?
(A) persistent, (B) prejudiced, (C) predictable
- _____ 14. Which of the following birds is classified as **predatory**?
(A) a pigeon, (B) an eagle, (C) a condor
- _____ 15. Two of the following items are **toxic** substances. Which one is **not** toxic?
(A) rattlesnake venom, (B) isopropyl alcohol, (C) fermented apple juice
- _____ 16. The word **prospect** can be which of the two following parts of speech?
(A) noun and verb, (B) verb and adjective, (C) noun and preposition
- _____ 17. What is the *plural* form of the word **eternity**? (A) eternitys, (B) eternally, (C) eternities

Short Answer Questions

Chapter 1

1. What was the area called Camp Green Lake once like?
2. How hot did it get at Camp Green Lake in the summer?
3. Who owned the shade at Camp Green Lake?
4. What happened if you were bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard?

Chapter 2

1. Why were the bad boys at Camp Green Lake made to dig a hole every day in the hot sun?
2. What choices did Stanley have when he agreed to go to Camp Green Lake?

Chapter 3

1. How did Stanley get to Camp Green Lake?
2. Why was Stanley teased by the kids and sometimes the teachers at his middle school?
3. Who was responsible for Stanley's being in the wrong place at the wrong time and getting sent to Camp Green Lake for a crime he didn't commit?
4. Stanley's father was smart and had perseverance. What didn't he have?
5. Why was Stanley Yelnats the fourth Stanley Yelnats?
6. How had the first Stanley Yelnats lost his fortune?
7. What was Stanley's father trying to invent?

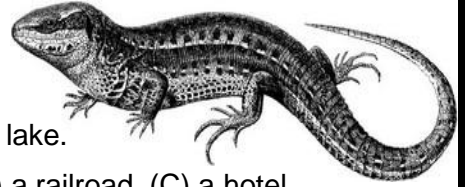
Chapter 4

1. In addition to Camp Green Lake's few run-down buildings and some tents, what did Stanley see farther away?
2. Why did Mr. Sir have a burlap sack filled with sunflower seeds on the floor next to his desk?
3. What color were the clothes that Mr. Sir gave Stanley?
4. What was the required size of the daily hole and how was it to be measured?
5. What did Mr. Sir say about Camp Green Lake?
6. Why didn't Camp Green Lake need a fence or a guard?

PART ONE: YOU ARE ENTERING CAMP GREEN LAKE

1 Pages 3-4 2 Page 5 3 Pages 6-10

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.



- _____ 1. Camp Green Lake was in (A) Arizona, (B) Texas, (C) Alabama.
- _____ 2. Camp Green Lake had no (A) buildings, (B) roads, (C) lake.
- _____ 3. Green Lake was also once the name of (A) a town, (B) a railroad, (C) a hotel.
- _____ 4. During the summer, Camp Green Lake was (A) a cool, shady retreat, (B) ninety-five degrees in the shade, (C) overflowing with campers.
- _____ 5. The hammock, strung between the only two trees in Camp Green Lake, belonged to (A) the Warden, (B) the younger campers, (C) the mayor of the town of Green Lake.
- _____ 6. The building that stood on Camp Green Lake was (A) a large two-story structure, (B) an old motel with twenty-two rooms, (C) a log cabin.
- _____ 7. Which of the following was **not** something found in the lake bed? (A) rattlesnakes and scorpions, (B) holes dug by the campers, (C) a small pool of mud.
- _____ 8. Sometimes, campers tried to be bitten by a rattlesnake or scorpion to avoid (A) digging a hole out in the lake, (B) hiking in the heat, (C) working on the Warden's new cabin.
- _____ 9. Being bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard meant (A) a day in the hospital, (B) a slow, painful death, (C) certain dismissal from the camp.
- _____ 10. The bad boys who were sent to Camp Green Lake were forced to (A) sleep outdoors, (B) dig a hole every day in the hot sun, (C) write about their feelings in a diary.
- _____ 11. The judge gave Stanley Yelnats a choice between going to Camp Green Lake or (A) a reform school, (B) jail, (C) a special school.
- _____ 12. At Stanley's middle school, the kids, and sometimes the teachers, made cruel comments about his (A) dirty clothes, (B) strange way of speaking, (C) large size.
- _____ 13. Stanley was not a bad kid, and he was (A) innocent of the crime for which he had been convicted, (B) extremely proud of his family, (C) a straight A student.
- _____ 14. Stanley's no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather was blamed when things went wrong in the family because (A) he had spent most of his life in jail, (B) a gypsy put a curse on him and his descendants for stealing a pig, (C) he was unlucky.
- _____ 15. Stanley's family seemed to always be (A) luckier than most, (B) moving from town to town, (C) in the wrong place at the wrong time.
- _____ 16. Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence and perseverance, but he never had any (A) money, (B) time to work on his projects, (C) luck.
- _____ 17. Stanley's family kept naming their sons "Stanley Yelnats" because they liked the fact that the name was (A) spelled the same frontward and backward, (B) not difficult to remember, (C) had a pleasant sound to it.
- _____ 18. Which of the following was **not** true of all the Stanley Yelnats? They (A) had made fortunes in the stock market, (B) were only children, (C) always remained hopeful.
- _____ 19. Even though Stanley's great-grandfather lost his fortune when he was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, the family considered him lucky because (A) he made it all the way to California, (B) he was the first Stanley Yelnats, (C) she didn't kill him.
- _____ 20. Which of the following led to Stanley's arrest? (A) His father's latest project of trying to invent a way to recycle old sneakers. (B) He was the only person riding on a bus that was later robbed. (C) He fought with a classmate who made fun of his name.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3

One definition of the word **contradiction** is *not in agreement*.

- Explain how the name **Camp Green Lake** was a *contradiction in terms*. How is it not a **camp**? Why is the word **green** a total falsehood? What is wrong with including **lake** as part of the name?
- When he chose Camp Green Lake over jail, what do you suppose Stanley expected to find when he arrived?

Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence, perseverance, and no luck. His latest project was trying to invent a way to recycle old sneakers.

- Stanley's father was probably aware of the old adage *Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door*—that is, if you invent what people want, they will buy it. Is it possible that Stanley's father might have had better luck if he chose better things to invent? Explain your answer.
- Using the three topics below as a guide, think of an invention for each one that you believe would appeal to the public and be profitable. Explain how each one would be beneficial to the people who bought it. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

School and Education

Transportation

Sports and Entertainment

- Write a report to distribute to inventors such as Stanley's father. Include drawings and diagrams.

Chapter 4, Chapter 5

- Why do you think the boys of Camp Green Lake preferred their nicknames to their real names? What was the advantage of a fictitious name?
- How were their nicknames different from those of people on "the outside"?
- Once he was released, do you suppose a boy continued using his Camp Green Lake name? Why or why not?
- Do you think nicknames are a good idea, a bad idea, or a non-issue? Explain your thinking.

Chapter 6, Chapter 7

Consider the following facts:

Derrick Dunne tormented Stanley by playing keep-away with his notebook. Stanley missed his bus and had to walk home because he was fishing his notebook out of the boys' restroom toilet, where Derrick had dropped it.

Stanley believed that the pair of smelly sneakers that fell from the sky and hit him on the head as he was walking home was a gift from God. In excitement, he ran and attracted the attention of a patrol car.

(continued on next page)

Stanley's parents couldn't afford a lawyer, and his mother told him to just tell the truth. No one believed that the sneakers fell from the sky.

The **judge** called Stanley's crime despicable and suggested that the discipline of Camp Green Lake might improve his character.

Stanley decided the experience with the shoes wasn't destiny after all. It was his **no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather's** fault.

- Think of how each of the five characters written in bold print played a part in Stanley's arrest, conviction, and sentencing to Camp Green Lake. List them in order from one to five—number one being the most responsible and number five being the least responsible. Explain why you assigned each position of blame.
- Which **one** do you think had the most potential to save Stanley? Explain how it could have been done.

When he was fifteen-years-old, Stanley's great-great-grandfather fell in love with Myra Menke, who would soon turn fifteen.

- Madame Zeroni warned Elya Yelnats that Myra Menke's head was as empty as a flowerpot. What evidence can you find in the story to prove that she was absolutely correct?
- Speculate as to what became of Myra after Elya left for America.

Chapter 8, Chapter 9, Chapter 10

Without a doubt, **Holes** author Louis Sachar had a good time creating Camp Green Lake's population of yellow-spotted lizards. He gave them the ability to spring out of holes and squash their prey. They also snacked on cactus thorns. They had a killer bite, and nobody snickered at their goofy color scheme. His little yellow varmits were worse than rattlesnakes. Even the Warden was afraid of them. Well, excuse me, but Mr. Sachar should not have all the fun! So. . .

- Create a nasty little critter of your own using the following criteria:

Its Category (mammal, reptile, fish, insect, etc)
Where it lives, sleeps, eats, travels, hides, hangs out, etc.
How its appearance is different from others of its kind.
How its behavior is way off the chart.
What to do if there is an encounter.
Its Common and Scientific Names

- Design a poster to inform the public about your animal's antisocial tendencies. Advise them how to behave if they spot the repugnant rascal.
- Include a drawing, or a three-dimensional replica, of your reprehensible little beast. (See **Graphic Organizer #2**)

Sometimes children with too many toys break and destroy them because they aren't taught to appreciate what they have, or they never have an opportunity to earn the things they want.

- At Camp Green Lake, however, neither overindulgence nor laziness was the problem. So what went wrong? How did the campers develop an I-don't-care attitude? Why do you think the residents of Camp Green Lake had wrecked the recreation room?
- Which of your possessions would you **never** purposely break or destroy? Explain why it's so important to you.

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Before his experience at Camp Green Lake, Stanley Yelnats believed that things often went wrong in his life. As a matter of fact, every Stanley Yelnats had awful luck, though all of them always remained hopeful.

- Do you agree with Stanley that he always seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? Give several examples from Stanley's story to support your answer.
 - Does it seem that the Yelnats family actually encountered bad luck more than the average family? Explain your answer.
-

Both Stanley's and Zero's family passed along the same melody from generation to generation. However, the words were entirely different. Stanley's version can be found on page 8 and Zero's on page 233.

- Which words seem to say "*It's not my fault if I don't succeed*"? What line(s) can you offer as proof? Would you characterize the dominant mood as *optimistic* or *pessimistic*? Explain.
 - One family's version of the melody said, "*Pursue your dreams. Don't let anything stop you.*" Which lines carry such a message? Which family passed them from one generation to another?
 - According to the point of view in the song lyrics, which family should have met with great success and happiness? Which family, if its members had lived by the words they sang, would have created generation after generation of dismal failures? Did the families progress according to the song they sang to their children? Explain how you arrived at your answer.
-

Stanley's family jokingly blamed his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather for their bad luck. But things aren't always what they seem.

- Explain how Stanley's arrest, his sentence to Camp Green Lake, meeting Zero, and running away into the desert appeared to be bad luck but were actually events of good luck.
 - How did Stanley bring about a change of luck for everyone at camp Green Lake, especially the Warden, Mr. Sir, and Mr. Pendanski?
 - Do you believe in the forces of good luck and bad luck? Explain why you do or do not.
-

Madame Zeroni told Elya Yelnats that the pig would get a little bigger each day he carried it up the mountain to drink from the stream, and he would get a little stronger as well.

- In what ways were Elya's task with the pig and Stanley's job of digging holes alike? How did the obstacles that Stanley faced get bigger—just like Elya's pig? How did Stanley grow stronger?
 - How did both Elya and Stanley benefit from their difficult experiences?
 - Write a short narrative about a difficult experience from life that you believe made you a stronger person. How did it compare to Stanley's situation?
-

On the fateful day that he found the lipstick tube, Stanley decided to turn it over to X-Ray rather than keeping it for himself.

- How was Stanley's decision good for him, good for X-Ray, but not for the Warden?
- What do you think would have happened if Stanley had claimed the tube as his find?
- Prove that Stanley was in the right place at the right time and made the right decision.

Building a Better Mousetrap

Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence, perseverance, and no luck. No doubt, Stanley Yelnats III had heard the old adage *Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door*—that is, invent what people want and they will buy it. His latest project was trying to devise a way to recycle old sneakers. It seems that the true meaning of the *better mousetrap* saying eluded him.

Perhaps you can assist Stanley's father and others like him by formulating some ideas.

Use the three topics listed on the left as a guide. In the first box, jot down your idea for an invention in that field. In the second box, make notes about how it would improve the lives of people who bought it. Write a report to distribute to inventors. Include drawings and diagrams.

	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Advantages</i>
<i>School and Education</i>		
<i>Transportation</i>		
<i>Sports and Entertainment</i>		