

# Cricket

## THEME

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.” Eleanor Roosevelt

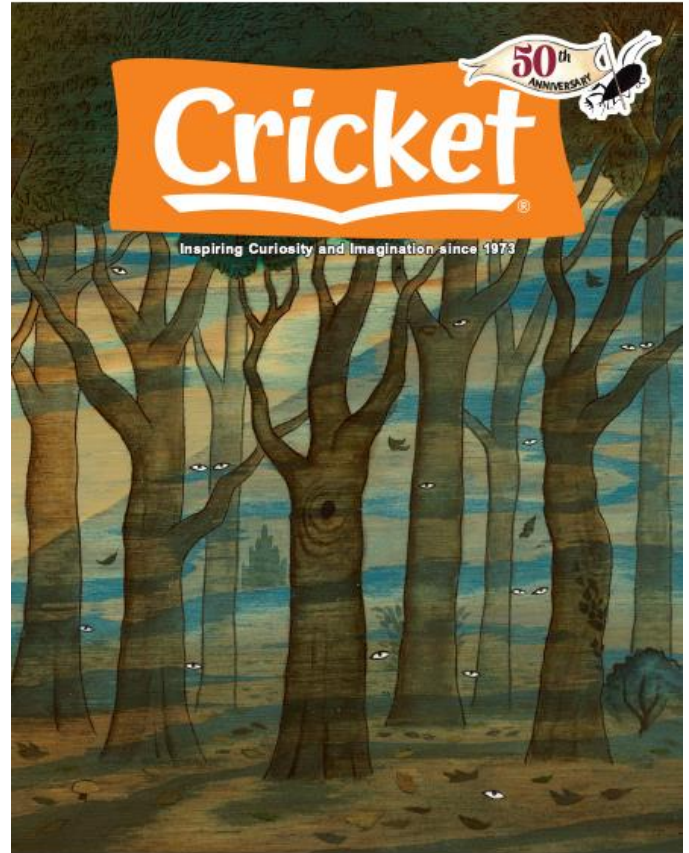
Explore what happens when different characters face their fears in this month’s issue of *Cricket*. Use the minilessons in this teacher guide to help reinforce language arts skills and engage students in a variety of learning activities.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

Why is it important to face your fears?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the genres and key elements of literary texts.
- Students will read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from a text.
- Students will conduct short research projects.
- Students will compare two texts that share similar themes and topics.
- Students will write informative/explanatory texts.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

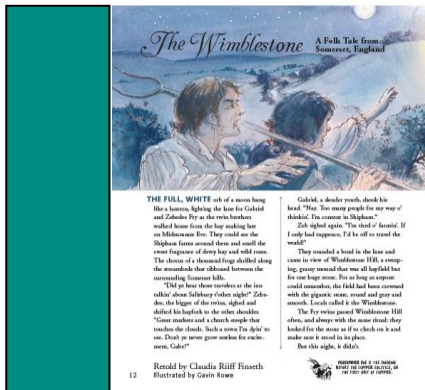
## SELECTIONS

- **The Wimblesstone**  
Folktale
- **Lights Across the Water**  
Historical Fiction
- **Bigger than Death**  
Contemporary Fiction

# The Wimblesstone

**pp. 12–17, Folktale**

Use this folktale about a dancing stone to help students analyze how characters' decisions affect plot.



## RESOURCES

- Character Decisions and Plot

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- ***tuppence* (p. 12)** a British abbreviation that means “two pennies”
- ***lore* (p. 13)** traditional knowledge, beliefs, and stories connected to a particular place, subject, or group
- ***fell* (p. 15)** evil or menacing
- ***changeling* (p. 17)** used in stories and tales to describe a baby that is secretly left to replace another baby
- ***yon* (p. 17)** an old-fashioned word that means “yonder”

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why is it important to face our fears?

Help students understand that when a person faces their fears, they do something even though it makes them feel scared or anxious. Point out that giving oral presentations and answering questions in class are two situations that can make students feel fear. Invite students to name other situations that make middle schoolers feel anxious or fearful. Then discuss why it is important to face our fears instead of avoiding them. Tell students to notice how characters in this story face fears.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Review the definitions with students. Then have students work in pairs to use the words to make predictions about story events. Invite volunteers to share predictions. Tell students to look for these words as they read.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How are the brothers similar and how are they different?
2. What parts of the story have an eerie or frightening mood?
3. Why does Zeb chase the stone?
4. How does knowing about lore help Gabriel?
5. Why do the faeries decide to help Gabriel?
6. Were you surprised that Gabriel did not take the gold? Explain.
7. In what way does Gabriel face his fears?
8. How would the story be different if Gabriel hadn't faced his fears?

## SKILL FOCUS: Character Decisions and Plot

**INSTRUCT:** Remind students that plot is the series of events in a story. The plot usually centers on a problem that characters try to resolve. The choices and decisions characters make—both good and bad decisions—affect how the plot unfolds. For example, a decision might help create the problem, make the problem worse, or resolve the problem. Discuss and list the first three-character decisions in “The Wimblesstone.” (Zeb chases the Wimblesstone to get the gold. Gabriel runs after Zeb. Gabriel challenges the People of the Hills to a race.) Have students work in pairs to discuss how each decision affects the plot and evaluate whether each decision is a good one or a bad one. Have pairs share ideas with the class.

**ASSESS:** Distribute the *Character Decisions and Plot* worksheet. Have students work in pairs to complete it. Discuss responses as a class.

## EXTEND

**Social Studies:** Have students conduct research projects based on the setting of “The Wimblesstone.” Students can use a map to trace the route Gabriel took in the story and calculate the distance. They can also use Google Earth to see the different ancient stone monuments in the story and then choose one to research and report on.

## Character Decisions and Plot

List the decisions characters make in “The Wimblesstone.” Then note the effects of each decision. Finally, decide whether the decisions are good or bad. Explain your reasoning. If you need more space, use the back of this paper.

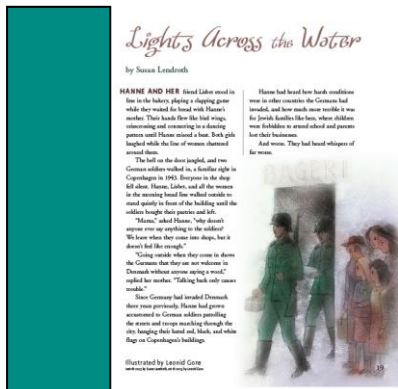
Character Decision	Effects of the Decision	Good or Bad Decision? Explain.
Zeb chases the Wimblesstone to get the gold.		
Gabriel runs after Zeb.		
Gabriel challenges the People of the Hills to a race.		

# Cricket® Teacher Guide: October 2023

# Lights Across the Water

**pp. 10–25, Historical Fiction**

Use this story set in 1943 during the German occupation of Denmark to give students practice in analyzing historical fiction.



## RESOURCES

- Elements of Historical Fiction

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the genres and key elements of literary texts.
- Students will compare two texts that share similar themes and topics.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- ***patrolling* (p. 19)** keeping watch over an area by regularly walking through it
- ***forbidden* (p. 19)** not permitted or allowed
- ***disarray* (p. 20)** a confused or messy condition
- ***dilapidated* (p. 23)** in very bad condition because of age or lack of care

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why is it important to face your fears?

Build background on the German occupation of Denmark by reading aloud the Author's Note on page 25. Invite students to share what they know about this period in history. Then explain that "Lights Across the Water" is a story about a young Jewish girl and her family living in Denmark in 1943. Discuss fears this character might have. Then tell students to note how the characters in the story face their fears.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Have students write sentences that use the words correctly, and then exchange sentences with a partner to check each other's work. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Describe two examples of characters facing fear in the story.
2. What does Hanne mean when she says to Lisbet, “This Friday is Rosh Hashanah—the Jewish New Year. We’ll light candles and eat apple slices dipped in honey, but it’s hard to imagine a sweet year to come”?
3. How do you think Hanne feels when she says, “But we’re Danish! We belong here—*not them*”?
4. What special things does Hanne pack in her schoolbag?
5. Is Mr. Merkel a real person? Explain.
6. What descriptive details does the author use to show Hanne’s fear when she is in the ambulance?
7. Is Hanne a hero? Explain.

## SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Historical Fiction

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that historical fiction contains a mix of facts and made-up details that allow readers to imagine what it was like to live during a time in the past. Tell students that this story is set 70 years ago in Europe during World War II. Invite students to identify factual information and made-up details that help them imagine the setting. Then ask volunteers to name something they learned about the historical period from the story.

**ASSESS:** Distribute a copy of the *Elements of Historical Fiction* worksheet to all students and have them work in pairs to complete it. Then have students share their responses with classmates.

## EXTEND

**History/Language Arts:** Have students read other grade-appropriate fiction books about the Holocaust. Your school librarian may be able to create a curated selection of books for students to choose from. Have students compare the settings, characters, conflicts, and events in their books with those in “Lights Across the Water.”

## Elements of Historical Fiction

Fill in the chart with details from “Lights Across the Water” that illustrate the different elements of historical fiction.

The <b>setting</b> is an authentic period in history in a real historical place.	
The main character is involved in a <b>conflict</b> that is realistic for the time and place of the setting.	
The <b>plot</b> is based on real and made-up events.	
<b>Characters</b> behave, relate, and dress in ways that are realistic for the time period.	
The characters’ <b>dialogue</b> reflects the knowledge and attitudes of the people living in that time and place.	

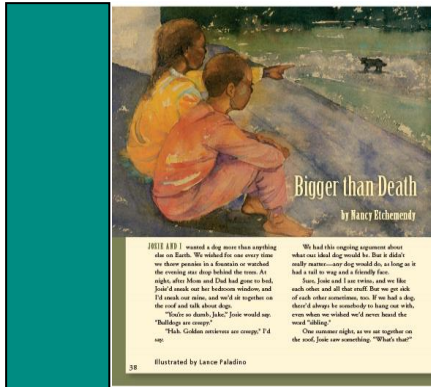
**DISCUSS** With a partner, discuss ways the plot or characters are influenced by the time period of the story.



## Bigger than Death

pp. 38–44, Contemporary Fiction

Teach students how to identify and analyze foreshadowing using this story about a brother and sister who want a dog more than anything else on earth.



## RESOURCES

- Foreshadowing

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from a text.
- Students will write informative/explanatory texts.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **ideal** (p. 38) exactly right or perfect
- **limited** (p. 40) not great in amount
- **the creeps** (p. 41) an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or fear
- **thicket** (p. 43) a group of bushes or small trees that grow close together

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why is it important to face your fears?

Share a fear you've faced and overcome, such as a fear of driving, a fear of doing a high dive into a pool, a fear of eating spicy foods, or a fear of taking a difficult course. Make sure the fear you share is one that students can understand. Explain why you are glad you faced the fear. Next, have students turn and talk with a partner about a fear they have faced and overcome. Tell students to think about what the characters in this story gain by facing their fears.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud. Have students work in groups of four to write sentences using these words, with each group member responsible for a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How do Josie and her brother meet Shadow?
2. At what point in the story is Shadow no longer alive?
3. Highlight a section of the story where the author created a frightening atmosphere or mood. Which details create the mood?
4. Shadow's grave marker says, "Here lies Shadow, whose love was bigger than death." How was Shadow's love bigger than death?
5. Shadow is an important character in the story, but she can't speak. What traits do her actions show?

## SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Foreshadowing

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that foreshadowing is an author's use of clues to hint at events that will happen later in a story. These clues might be included in descriptive details and in characters' words and behavior. For example, if a character in a book or movie says "I have a bad feeling about this" just before opening a door, you can expect that something dramatic or scary will happen when the door is opened. Foreshadowing can also add suspense to stories. Have students reread the first two pages of "Bigger than Death" and then work in pairs to note details that foreshadow or hint at Shadow's death and the existence of the puppies. Bring students together to discuss their ideas.

**ASSESS:** Distribute the *Foreshadowing* worksheet and have students work in pairs to complete it. Bring the class together to share ideas.

## EXTEND

**Science:** Have students work in pairs to brainstorm a list of questions about animal behavior (Why do birds sing when the sun rises? Why do elephants touch trunks?) and then choose two or three to answer using books and the internet. Students will write a short report that includes their questions, the answers they found, and the sources they used.

## Foreshadowing

Reread the story to find details or passages that foreshadow events that happen later in the story. Note the details and describe the events they hint at.

Examples of Foreshadowing	What events does the foreshadowing hint at?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

**Discuss:** Foreshadowing often creates a feeling of suspense in a story, making readers eager to know what will happen next. Which events in the story create suspense? What is the story's most suspenseful moment?