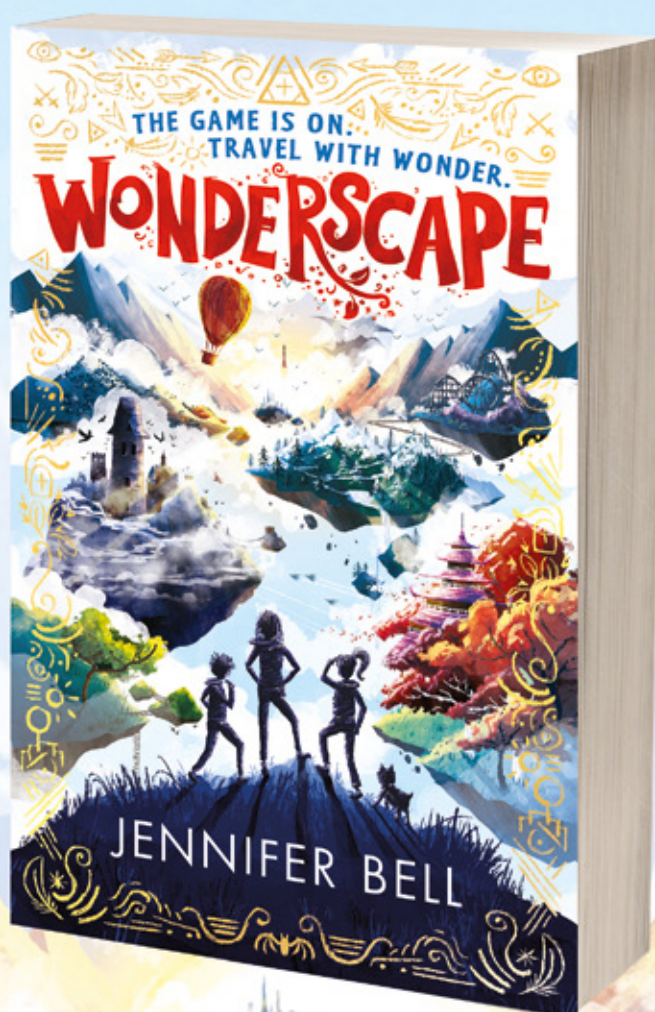


THE GAME IS ON.
TRAVEL WITH WONDER.

WONDERSCAPE

TEACHERS' NOTES



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Gaming and time travel collide in this thrilling middle-grade adventure, from bestselling author Jennifer Bell. When Arthur, Ren and Cecily investigate a mysterious explosion, they find themselves trapped in the year 2473. Lost in the Wonderscape, an epic in-reality adventure game, they must call on the help of some unlikely historical heroes to play their way home before time runs out.

www.wonderscapebook.com



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These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

Before You Start:

- As you read through the book it would be helpful to use a group journal to organise and store discussions and responses to the text. The group could also be asked to consider the writer's use of language and how she creates a particular effect or image.
- As you read, you may also want to encourage the group to pick out key vocabulary, such as **protoplasm, gnome, hallucination, shimmied, avalanche, quartz, fjord, prism, shoji, transpired, computational neuroscience** or **samurai**, that the children may need clarifying, and add these to a glossary, following up on new and unfamiliar vocabulary by using photographs and video sources to bring these words to life and support the pupils in using them in context.

Session 1: Cover and Chapters 1–6:

- Begin by sharing Paddy Donnelly's cover illustration and asking the children to consider it carefully, reading what messages it might contain about the book they are about to read, and unpicking any connections they may make with other stories they know. Ask the children to make predictions of what the story could be about and to justify their responses, drawing out any connections they may have made to other stories. Record the children's responses and return to these as you read the book, comparing the children's initial thoughts to how the story actually unfolds.
- Encourage the children to look at the cover illustration in more detail.
 - Who do you think these three characters could be? What do you think is the relationship between the three characters and the dog — are they friends, enemies, family? What clues are in their body language?
 - Where do you think they are standing, and what is the landscape they are looking over? What else do you notice about the setting?
 - What can you say about the layout and appearance of the cover? What about the typeface used for the title Wonderscape, with the R seeming to sprout leaves? What do you think is the meaning of the tagline, 'The Game is on. Travel with Wonder'? What might be the significance of the characters and symbols that border the page?
 - Where and when do you think the story might be set? What leads you to think this? Do you know any other stories from this setting? Does the cover make you want to read the story? Why? Why not?
- Read aloud the opening of the story, Chapter 1. Give the children time and space to reflect on and discuss what they have heard and consider:
 - What do you think is happening in the chapter you have just heard? Who are the main characters and what do you learn about them?
 - What impression do you form of Arthur's, Cecily's and Ren's personalities? How do you think they get on? Do they remind you of other characters you have met in books or films, or maybe in real life, in your own school?
 - How does the opening sentence affect you as a reader? Do you think it is an effective way to grab your attention and make you want to read on?
 - What is the impact on you as a reader of seeing the action mainly through Arthur's eyes?
 - Do you think you would investigate the source of the whimpering?
 - What does the dialogue between the three schoolmates suggest to you about the dynamic of the group? What do you make of this dog Cloud and his mysterious collar?



- What do you think is happening to the three of them – and the dog – at the end of the chapter? What do you predict will happen next?
- Read on aloud through Chapter 2. Ask the children to discuss their responses to the text so far, with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls **‘the four basic questions’**. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
 - Was there anything you liked about this text?
 - Was there anything that you particularly disliked?
 - Was there anything that puzzled you?
 - Were there any patterns ... any connections that you noticed?
- As you read on through the story, the children will benefit from regular opportunities to return to these questions and share their personal responses to the key events and character developments as they occur.
 - How do you think the three acquaintances and Cloud have moved from Number 27 to the stern cabin of the Principia?
 - Have you ever heard about a locked-room puzzle or been to an escape room? What suggests this might be one?
 - What sense do you make of the code-breaking and lock-picking, the Wonderscape message, and the riddle? What do you think will happen next, as Ren turns the handles and pushes?
- Carry on reading aloud, to the end of Chapter 4. Again, allow time and space for the children to reflect on what you have read. Discuss:
 - How do you explain their discussion with the first officer? Where do you think Captain W Saint-Ocean, from the portrait in the cabin, might be?
 - Why do you think the author has created the challenges for the characters to face? Do they remind you of escape-room puzzles or programmes like The Crystal Maze? Do you enjoy challenges of this kind? Why? Why not?
 - What skills and attitudes do you think a team needs to be able to solve this kind of puzzle? Do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren have these skills and attitudes? What aspects of their personality, background and skills are you learning from the story so far?
 - Do you know anything about Isaac Newton? How might you explain his presence on the deck of the Principia?
- Finish the session by reading aloud Chapters 5 and 6, and discussing as before, after giving the children time and space to reflect on what they have heard. You could revisit some of Aidan Chambers’ four basic questions now the group know more about the In-Reality Adventure Game they find themselves in, the mimics that populate it, the Wonderways that connect its realms, and the mysterious Wondercloaks Newton gives them.
 - What have you found out in these chapters that advances your understanding of the story and what Arthur, Cecily and Ren have experienced so far? What questions do you still have?
 - At the end of Chapter 6, the three discover they have only 53 hours and 27 minutes to find the inventor of the reverse-engineered Wonderway: how does their dilemma affect you as a reader? How do you think they should proceed? What do you think will happen next?

Session 2: Chapters 7–11:

- Read Chapter 7 aloud. Give the children time and space to reflect on the chapter they have heard, and discuss:
 - How do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren feel about the danger they are in? How do you know? What do you think their different reactions tell you about their personalities?
 - How does the Wondernews footage of Milo Hertz fleeing with Cloud affect you as a reader? What sense do you make of it?



- How do you think each might feel as they head off to Realm 89 with the Wondercloaks Newton has given them? What do you think is the significance of these cloaks?
- Before reading Chapter 8, reflect on the events of the story so far and the characters of Arthur, Cecily and Ren. Ask the children to complete a **Role on the Wall** for each character. To do this, have a prepared template of a boy or girl onto which the children can record their ideas. Ask the children to write words or phrases sharing what they know about the characters' outward appearance, or other information about them, on the outside of the outline. Then, use these to infer and deduce the internal feelings and characteristics of the characters and note these on the inside of the outline.
- To promote a higher level of thinking, ask the children to consider what we know from the characters' speech and the narration, and what we have to infer from body language, gestures and actions. Support the children in making explicit links between the external and internal. For example, how does something Arthur does tell us about his personality? Or, how does Ren's personality make a specific action seem most likely?
- Encourage the children to return to these as you continue to read the story, using a different colour each time to highlight the knowledge they gain each time they read more.
- Another way to organise the children's thinking about the different characters would be to plot three overlapping circles as a Venn diagram to identify the similarities and differences between the three protagonists.
- Now, read aloud Chapter 8. Allow time and space to reflect, discuss and consider:
 - Do you think Arthur is right to reproach himself for not wedging the Wonderway at Number 27? What do you think this remorse tells us about his character?
 - Would you like to wear clothing that revealed your emotions? Can you think of anything you wear already that tells people anything about you?
 - What impression do you get of the character of Milo Hertz from the way we see him described here?
 - What do you think the DIRT and Wonderskills are that are mentioned? How do you rate the Pipsqueaks' chances of winning the race? Think about the word pipsqueak. What does this term mean to you? What impression do you have of the Falcon's Fury girl who calls Ren this? How do you think Ren feels about being called a pipsqueak? What impression do you think it gives of the team? Do you think the name accurately reflects them? Do you think it will be a disadvantage to them or might it have its advantages? What could these be?
- Read aloud Chapters 9 and 10, which describe the trio's unlikely success in the race, defeating Tomoe Gozen, and discuss:
 - Think about the references to Japanese culture. Have you heard any of these before? Do you read manga or watch anime, or play games that reference this culture and history, or have you heard of Tomoe Gozen?
 - Were you surprised when the Pipsqueaks drove into thin air and parachuted into the lead? How do you think it must have felt to be Arthur, who knew what he was planning, or Ren and Cecily (especially with her vertigo), who did not know?
 - How does the writer manage to convey the excitement of the race? Look back at the language and structure of this part of the story and encourage the children to make references to this. You might also get the children to prepare their own reading of this section, thinking about how they might convey this in their reading.
 - What do you think will happen when they accept Tomoe Gozen's invitation to spend the night? What do you think they might find out about Milo Hertz?
- Now move on to Chapter 11. Read this aloud and take time and space to reflect and discuss:
 - How does the calm and safety of Tomoe Gozen's Japanese-themed home affect you as a reader, after the thrill and danger of the race? How do you think the three might feel about being in her house?



- What do you think is the importance of their discovery that Hxperion is making money through the game and that Cloud is also a mimic – created by Milo Hertz – who can take on different forms?
- What more do you find out about each of the characters, particularly Ren, from their actions? And what is shown on their Wondercloaks that you could add to the Roles on the Wall? Do you think it is safe and sensible for them to rest, and what do you predict might happen the next day?

Session 3: Chapters 12–17:

- Read aloud Chapters 12 and 13. Give the children time and space to reflect, and discuss:
 - How do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren must feel to wake to danger and then find out about Tiburon's plot and misuse of the timekey?
 - How does Tiburon's tricking of Tomoe and the other heroes affect you as a reader? Do you think he has made good use of man's dream of time travel? If you could travel forward and back in time, what time would you visit?
 - Ren discovers the Wonderskill of archery, and Arthur channels Newton's brilliant mind and understanding of maths and physics. What Wonderskill would you most like to acquire, and how would you use it?
 - What impression are you forming of the three adopted siblings, Milo Hertz, Valeria Mal'Fey and Tiburon Nox?
- You could again use a three circle Venn diagram to organise your thinking about the three founders of Hxperion, or add a quick **pen portrait** of each to the Reading Journal. A pen portrait is an informal description of a person or a group of people: a character sketch in words. A pen portrait may discuss 'hard' facts, such as age or gender, but it should also focus on 'softer' aspects, such as attitudes and appearance. From the chapters you have read so far, information you could include in the pen portrait might be name, location, appearance, background, likes and dislikes, as well as any other ideas they have expressed and things the writer has implied.
- Continue to read aloud Chapters 14 and 15. Allow time and space for the group to discuss what they have heard.
 - What clues do you have about the identity of the hero of this realm? What do you think we know about Amaros Ba?
 - What is the impact on you as a reader of their breaking the code to enter Milo Hertz's offices? What do you think they expect to find? What impression are you forming of Milo Hertz, and how he relates to his siblings Valeria and Tiburon? How do you think the discovery of the M-Class mimic will advance the story? Do you think M-73 will be like the V-Class and T-Class mimics the three have met so far?
 - What insights into Arthur, Cecily and Ren do you gain from the discussion they have of their respective families? How can you use this information to update the Roles on the Wall?
- Finish the session by reading aloud Chapters 16 and 17. After leaving time and space to reflect, support the children in discussing:
 - How do the trio's discoveries about Valeria and Tiburon's plotting, and Milo's fate in a closed realm, affect you as a reader? How do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren might feel? What do you think they should do?
 - What impression does Amaros Ba make on you, and what impression do you think he makes on Arthur, Cecily and Ren, especially before they realise he is the hooded figure and explorer hero of the realm? What role do you think the shadow patches he provides might play as the story develops? Could they provide an advantage to the three characters? How?
 - What do you predict Tiburon will say to Arthur, Cecily and Ren as the holographic screen hovers in front of them? Why do you think he is smiling as he prepares to speak?



Session 4: Chapters 18–22:

- Read aloud Chapters 18 and 19. Give time and space for the group to reflect on what they have heard, and discuss:
 - How does Tiburon Nox's game-wide announcement to all wanderers affect you as a reader? Is it what you were expecting? How do you think it might affect Arthur, Cecily and Ren, who know it is addressed to them and that Tiburon is on their trail?
 - Do you think the shadow patches Amaros Ba has given them will keep them safe? How?
 - What do you think Amaros Ba means when he tells the three that they will have to do four hours' work to meet the hero of Realm 42: Forest of the Leopard? Do you think it is time they can afford? In what kind of realm do you think Tiburon Nox might have imprisoned Milo Hertz?
 - What hope do you think the trio might take from the secret messages the heroes of different realms have been able to pass to each other through songs?
 - Who do you think the hero of Realm 42 might be, and what is the significance of Cloud having been to this realm before, and knowing the woman they see on arrival? What is the impact on the trio of crossing so many realms, and do you think this will affect their ability to find Milo and the timekey and help the heroes?
 - How does the safari the three undertake affect you as a reader? Have you ever visited a zoo or safari park, or watched wildlife documentaries? What do you think it would be like to see what Arthur, Cecily and Ren are seeing at such close quarters?
 - What is the impact on you of Arthur taking off his earpiece so he sees the truth, and telling Cecily and Ren to 'open your eyes' and press the Hxperion button? Where do you think they will find themselves, as their seats disappear from under them?
- Continue to read aloud Chapters 20 and 21 and discuss:
 - What do Arthur, Cecily and Ren learn about the identity of the hero of this realm?
 - How does Ren's fear of bugs affect you as a reader? Do you have any fears? What insights into her personality does this give us?
 - What insights into Arthur's, Cecily's and Ren's lives do you gain from their discussion while they are working? What do you think you would miss if you were in their position?
 - What do you know about Wangari Maathai? Does her name mean anything to you, as it does to Ren, or nothing, as it does to Arthur? What do you think she has in common with the other heroes the three have encountered, and why might she be an ally for Milo Hertz?
- Finish the session by reading the opening of Chapter 22 in which they reach Realm 152: World of the Wizard. The first three pages of the chapter, up to 'Naeres' barren landscape' (p.267) capture the atmosphere of the realm. Ask the children to **visualise** the scene in their mind's eye as you are reading aloud, closing their eyes and picturing the scene unfolding as if it were a scene in a film. Read the section aloud two or three times and then ask them to describe to a partner what they pictured. You could give the children simple art materials to depict their visualisation.
- Following this, ask the children to share what they imagined and to identify key vocabulary or phrases which support their understanding or interpretation. For example, 'rainbow-coloured lights of a huge fairground twinkled in the distance' or 'wind whistling eerily over the plain, the cracked red earth, the grey sky looming overhead' or 'stuffed toy prizes included unicorns, bears and a lizard-headed man' or 'crossroads between a ghost train, a stall selling science-fiction novels, a towering helter-skelter and a fortune-teller's tent.' Ask the children why these words or phrases in particular stood out to them.
 - What made them so vivid or memorable?



- What impression is created by the author through the descriptions?
- How do these descriptions make you feel?
- What would you be thinking if you were an onlooker?
- Read the rest of the chapter and discuss the journey on the *Menlo Express* as the three have to solve a further problem to find Milo Hertz.
 - How do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren might feel as they board the train and start to look for Milo? Do you follow the logic of their solution to the light bulb problem?
 - What is the impact on you as a reader of their finally finding Milo, and Cloud's joyful reunion with his master?
 - What do you know of Thomas Edison, the hero of Realm 152, and Mary Shelley, the hero of Realm 18? How do you see the story drawing to a conclusion, as time continues to run down for Arthur, Cecily and Ren? Do you think they will be able to leave this realm and find the timekey in the heart of Tiburon's favourite realm?

Session 5: Chapters 23–28:

- Read aloud Chapter 23. Give time and space for the group to reflect on what they have heard, then discuss:
 - How do you think Arthur, Cecily and Ren might feel to know the fate of the heroes and their own return to Earth is down to them? What would you say to encourage them? You could write a brief note of advice, summarising what they have so far achieved together, and why you think they can be successful.
 - What ideas could you contribute to fuel the Menlo Express? What inventions would you like to see that would improve or enhance our lives?
 - How do you feel the relationship between the three has changed over the course of the story? You could consider their individual development through the Roles on the Wall, and also see how they have supported and got to know each other better.
- Read aloud Chapters 24 and 25. Allow time and space to reflect on the breakneck developments, then discuss:
 - Have you ever navigated a maze? Do you believe that you can keep your left hand on one wall to avoid getting lost? How do you think each of the three feels as they enter? How does each deal with their worst fear? What would be your worst fear? Heights or bugs like Cecily and Ren?
 - How does the drama of confrontation with Tiburon and his T-Class mimics, then with Valeria and her V-class mimics, affect you as a reader? How does the writer build and sustain the tension?
 - Where do you think the hole will lead that the three have jumped down? How do you think they will escape?
- Continue to read aloud Chapter 26, in which Arthur, Cecily and Ren flee through the sewers and reflect on what they have achieved in their soon-to-end short lives, before finding the heroes from the other realms and planning to go out in a blaze of glory. Discuss:
 - How do Arthur's, Cecily's and Ren's reflections on life affect you as a reader? What mood do they strike? Do you agree with their philosophy?
 - Are you, like the three, surprised to find Isaac Newton, Tomoe Gozen, Amaro Ba, Wangari Maathai and Thomas Edison? What do you make of their plan to use Ren's multi-tool laser to generate an explosion, and thwart Tiburon at the cost of their own lives?
- Finish the session by reading the final two chapters, in which the story draws to a close.
 - What is the effect on you as a reader of the climactic resolution in the sewers and anatomy theatre? How does the author draw everything together in one place?



- How do you respond to the way the author goes on to end the story? Is this what you predicted?
 - How does the new friendship of Arthur, Cecily and Ren, and their return to the normality of being late to school after three days spent in the year 2473, affect you as a reader?
 - How do you think each of the characters feels? How do you know?
 - Do you feel that Chapter 28, in which it is said 'Our futures are full of possibility', resolves the story? What do you think the ending means?
- Revisit Aidan Chambers' four basic questions, giving the children the opportunity to reflect.
 - Did you enjoy this story?
 - What puzzles did it contain?
 - What links do you see to other stories you already know?

After reading, you could also:

- Consider the different characters, the plot and the different settings.
 - How does the author use the six different realms (Realm 33: Voyage of the Captain; Realm 89: Race of the Warrior; Realm 105: Land of the Explorer; Realm 42: Forest of the Leopard; Realm 152: World of the Wizard; Realm 18: Castle of the Doctor) and Earth? How important do you think they are to the story? How does she use Wonderways, Wondercloaks, Wonderskills, DIRT, shadow patches and so on to create a credible setting?
 - Which character was your favourite? Why?
 - Which character, aspect of the story, incident or episode interested the group the most?
 - Did any of the characters remind you of characters in other books?
- Review the story in chronological order and consider the different emotions that Arthur, Cecily and Ren have felt throughout, the high and low points, using the Roles on the Wall to support discussion of their emotional journeys. You could use **hot-seating** to explore the feelings of any of the characters further; in hot-seating, one member of the group role-plays a central character from a poem or story and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character's motivation and responses. The children could work collaboratively to choose words that describe a character's emotions at different points of the story. Write these on post-it notes and then organise them to demonstrate shades of emotional intensity that they have felt in the story and create a **graph of emotion**.
- Ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold – for example: *the most memorable part of the story was... because...; my top moment in the story was... because...* – and in pairs ask them to identify their favourite part of the narrative. Encourage the children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.
- If possible, leave copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.
- Repeat the visualisation activity used in Session 4 (Chapter 22) to explore the different realms which are often very atmospherically described.
- Like Ren, find out more about the heroes Isaac Newton, Tomoe Gozen, Wangari Maathai, Thomas Edison and Mary Shelley; or write a biography of the invented explorer Amaros Ba.
- Learn more about the story of the Chinese New Year and the Jade Emperor that the three use to solve the code in Chapter 14. <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/short-stories/the-great-race>.



- Investigate the story of *Frankenstein* and its composition by Mary Shelley on a rainy afternoon in 1816 in Geneva, where she was staying with her husband, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, their friend Lord Byron and Lord Byron's physician, John Polidori. The group, trapped indoors by the inclement weather, passed the time telling and writing ghost stories.

Other suggested titles:

Other books by Jennifer Bell:

The Crooked Sixpence (Uncommoners #1)

The Smoking Hourglass (Uncommoners #2)

The Frozen Telescope (Uncommoners #3)

Agents of the Wild: Operation Honeyhunt

Agents of the Wild: Operation Icebeak (September 2020)

Other books with alternative worlds, especially those inspired by games:

Wed Wabbit, Lissa Evans

There May Be a Castle, Piers Torday

Beware of the Storybook Wolves, Lauren Child

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

Jumanji, Chris van Allsburg

Books about heroes mentioned in the text:

Mama Miti. Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya, Donna Jo Napoli

Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein, Linda Bailey, illustrated by Júlia Sardà



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