

Answer Key

Chapters 1 & 2

Vocabulary:

Students' definitions will vary. 1. looked down on with contempt; regarded as worthless; 2. the entire affair or concern; 3. stiffly formal and proper, prudish; 4. sickeningly, causing disgust or nausea; 5. short, plump, and chubby; 6. pandemonium—a wild uproar, tumult; allotted—assigned share or portion; 7. shrewd, wary

Characterization:

Answers may vary but should resemble the following: 1. Jess works hard and helps his mother; 2. Even though he likes May Belle, Jess picks on her, although he gets mad at himself for doing it; 3. Jess is sad and perhaps a little jealous that his father does not give him the attention he gives his younger sisters; 4. Jess expects a lot from himself.

Questions:

1. Jess goes outside to practice running. It is his ambition to become the fastest runner in the fifth grade.
2. Jess likes to draw, and he does it in the privacy of his room.
3. Miss Edmunds wears pants. She is the only teacher who encourages Jess in his drawing. Some people refer to Miss Edmunds as a hippie because she has long hair and plays the guitar. She teaches the children many contemporary songs—songs associated with young people of that era. She had “make-up all over her eyes but none on her mouth.”
4. Answers may vary slightly. The “diamond in the rough” is the rare, unique, special item that sticks out among more mediocre items.
5. Leslie has short hair, and is wearing a blue tank top and cut-off jeans.

Thinking About the Story:

6. Jess's two older sisters “despise” him. They tease him and complain about him. They constantly whine to their mother and manipulate her to get what they want. Jess doesn't seem to like them.
7. Jess cares for his two younger sisters, especially May Belle. He makes sandwiches for them. He gives Joyce Ann part of his sandwich when May Belle calls her a baby. He knows May Belle “worships” him. He hopes to make her proud by winning the races. He refers to her as “good old May Belle” because she won't complain if he thumps her on the head. He picks on May Belle, and then he feels bad for doing it.
8. Answers may vary. The arrival of new neighbors will have an important impact on Jess's life.
9. Jess's father got upset and said the teachers were trying to turn Jess “into some kind of a—”. Jess understood that there was something strange or weird about being a boy who likes to draw. He decided that it was best to keep this ambition hidden.
10. The author uses the following phrases to describe Miss Edmunds: “long swishy black hair and blue, blue eyes,” “soft floaty voice that made Jess squish inside,” “she was gorgeous,” “beautiful wild creature,” “wild beauty,” “diamond, sparkling out of that muddy, grassless, ditry-brick setting.” Answers will vary. Because Miss Edmunds encouraged Jess's drawing, and because her arrival on Fridays means Jess gets to go to music class, Jess probably exaggerates his feelings about her.
11. Answers will vary. Jess thinks, probably falsely, that he and Miss Edmunds are the only ones in Lark Creek who appreciate things like drawing and music.
12. Answers will vary. She probably does not think he is “the best.” She simply was encouraging him because she thought he could draw well.

Dig Deeper:

13. Answers will vary.
14. Answers will vary. From Jess's point of view their relationship seems distant. On weekends when he isn't working, Jess's father sleeps. It seems to Jess that he has been thought too big for hugging since the day he was born. All his dad says to him all evening is “Mighty late with the milking?”
15. The general lesson in these verses is that members of a family should love and respect each other. Answers will vary.
16. Answers will vary.

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Chapters 3 & 4:

Vocabulary:

1. awoke; 2. conceited smile; 3. giving out; 4. loathsome; 5. obvious; 6. criticism; 7. reluctantly; 8. comfort; 9. musical; 10. dangerously; 11. drunken; 12. despots; 13. dedicated; 14. stately

Similes:

- swallowed grasshoppers. Jess's feeling of anticipation compares to swallowing grasshoppers.
- moths fighting to be freed of cocoons. Quivering boys compares to moths fighting to be set free from their cocoons.
- a bull. Gary compares to a bull.
- one of the strings she was strumming. The "zing" that Jess felt compares to a vibrating guitar string.
- a fat white lazy cloud. Jess drifting across the creek bed compares to clouds drifting across the sky.
- being under water. Being in the dark places in the woods compares to being under water.

Questions:

- First impressions are the very first things you think about someone the first time you meet that person. Leslie wears faded, cut-off blue jeans, a blue undershirt, and sneakers with no socks. Everyone else is wearing their spring Sunday best. Leslie makes a poor first impression based entirely on how she looks.
- When Jess contradicts Gary Fulcher, Fulcher challenges Jess saying, "next though you're going to want to let some *girl* run." Jess invites Leslie to run just to get Gary Fulcher angry.
- Leslie says that her parents have moved to Lark Creek to reassess their value structure.
- Jess writes about football, which he hates, but he is afraid that everyone will laugh at him if he writes about drawing.
- Jess feels like he is being drawn under the water by the power of her words. He can hardly breathe. He feels fear.
- It slips past his fingertips leaving a dry fossil on the page. It seems dead, lifeless. He cannot capture the "poetry of the trees."

Thinking About the Story:

- Answers will vary. Jess is embarrassed to show his drawing to Gary. He thinks Gary will make fun of him.
- Answers will vary. Some of these unwritten rules include the following: The older boys got the upper field for playing ball. The girls took part of the upper field for hopscotch, jump rope, and hanging around and talking. Boys in the third, fourth, and fifth grades ran races on the lower field. Younger boys played King on the Mountain on the slope between the fields. Generally, girls stayed on the upper field and did not cross over to where the boys played. Leslie broke these rules by coming right over to where Jess was. Then she participated in the races and won. She refused to go play hopscotch with the other girls.
- Jess is stunned. The other boys are also stunned and silent.
- Answers will vary. Jess is angry that he has lost, and he directs it at Gary Fulcher instead of Leslie.
- Answers will vary. He felt she had got him into enough trouble.
- Answers will vary. Jess seems to have decided that he isn't going to be afraid of what other people think anymore. He decides that he is going to be Leslie's friend and ignore people who make fun of him for that.
- Answers will vary. Leslie recognizes that she and Jess don't fit in very well with the other students.
- Answers will vary. Jess admires Leslie for her imagination and for the way she proudly doesn't fit in. He imagines himself becoming like Leslie, being more imaginative, being more adventurous and less fearful. He likes to spend time with her because she is helping him become what he wants to be.

Dig Deeper:

- Jess fears being under water. He fears the deep dark part of the woods. Jess is embarrassed to have these fears. Answers will vary. Having some fears can protect us or help keep us safe from dangerous situations.
- God is the source of comfort mentioned in these verses. Answers will vary.
- Jess tries to hide his love of drawing. He tries to become the fastest runner. He pretends to like football. Leslie doesn't try to fit in. On her first day of school she "stood there in front, her eyes saying, 'OK, friends, here I am,'" waiting to be accepted by the other students. She wasn't dressed like the other students. She breaks the playground "rules" by joining the boys' races. Answers will vary.
- In these verses Paul is saying that he has become like others—identified with them, sympathized with them, followed their rules—in order to preach the gospel to them. Answers will vary. The Bible does tell us to be careful choosing friends (see for example: Proverbs 13:20; 22:24; 28:7), however one good reason for wanting to fit in with a group of peers is that by doing so you are in a position to teach them about your faith.

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Chapters 5 & 6:

Vocabulary:

1. carried out forcefully and energetically; 2. the killing of a king or queen; 3. walls, ramparts, or railings on the edge of a platform or roof; 4. extra; the amount that is left when the need is satisfied; 5. having lost hope; 6. to smile with contempt or scorn; 7. guided, directed

Metaphors:

Answers may vary. Accept reasonable responses.

1. Miss Edmunds; Lark Creek
2. Mrs. Myers's smile
3. Janice Avery
4. Leslie

Questions:

1. Janice Avery and her friends terrorized the younger girls by grabbing their hopscotch rocks, running through their games of jump rope, and stealing their milk money.
2. May Belle is upset because Janice Avery stole her Twinkies.
3. Leslie and Jess write a false love note to Janice from a boy Janice likes. The note asks Janice to meet him after school but not to tell anyone. They know she will tell her friends and then be embarrassed when he doesn't show up and she finds out the note is a trick. She is very angry and humiliated the next day.
4. Jess feels sorry for Janice.
5. Jess wants May Belle to have something special because he and Leslie can't always include May Belle in their activities.
6. Jess gives Leslie a puppy. Leslie gives Jess a box of watercolors, brushes and art paper. Leslie's gift shows that she understands Jess's love of drawing and painting.

Thinking About the Story:

7. Answers will vary. Jess is feeling guilty for what he had done. He is also considering the feelings of someone other than himself or Leslie.
8. The race track Jess's dad gives him is poorly made and doesn't work right. Answers will vary. He may have spent more on it than he should have even if it wasn't the top-of-the-line race track. He wanted it to work to please Jess and so he could feel proud of the gift he'd given.
9. Answers will vary. Jess was bothered by the way his family was behaving on Christmas. He was glad to get away from the house and meet Leslie in the shed. Christmas is a special time of year, and Leslie makes Jess feel special.

Dig Deeper:

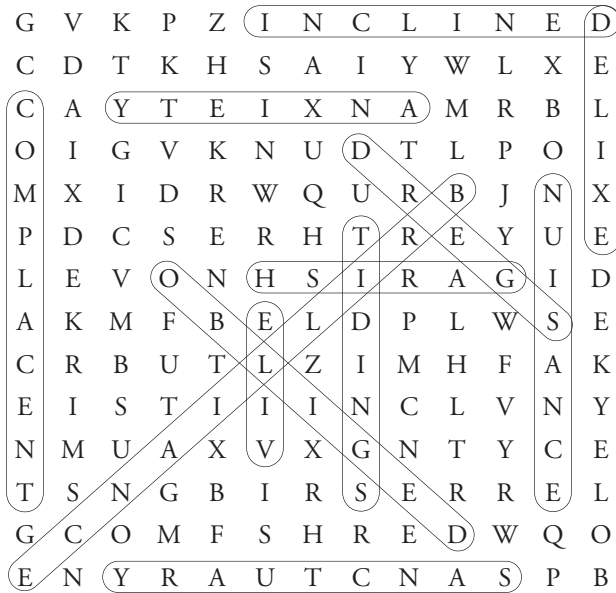
10. These verses tell us to not seek revenge or bear a grudge on someone, but to love them as we love ourselves. We should let God take care of the situation and seek to live in peace with everyone. We should be kind to enemies.
11. Answers will vary. No. Leslie and Jess should not have sought revenge on Janice Avery. Answers will vary. They might have tried being kind to her or including her in some of their activities. This might have helped to change Janice into a kinder person.
12. Answers will vary.

Chapters 7 & 8

Vocabulary:

1. inclined; 2. exiled; 3. dregs; 4. nuisance; 5. garish; 6. brilliance; 7. tidings; 8. obliged; 9. vile; 10. anxiety; 11. complacent; 12. sanctuary

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Questions:

1. Leslie is spending more time with her father, helping him fix up the house.
2. Leslie does not go to church, and perhaps because of the books she reads she is more comfortable with the idea of “spirits” than the idea of God. Students may notice, however, that the rest of the prayer sounds very Christian (“Thy right arm hast given us the victory”) even closing with “Amen.”
3. When Jess discovers Janice Avery crying in the bathroom, he convinces Leslie to find out what is wrong. Leslie helps Janice simply by listening to her and giving her a bit of asked-for advice. Afterward, Leslie believe she may have made a new friend.
4. Jess tells Leslie she wouldn’t like it. “It’s boring,” he tells her.
5. Jess’s mother is afraid Leslie won’t “dress right” or will “poke her nose up” at the family.

Thinking About the Story:

6. Answers will vary. It is Leslie’s imagination that makes Terabithia seem like a real magic kingdom to Jess. Leslie can make up stories about their kingdom and make the woods—and Jess—seem special. “The magic” is imagination.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.
9. Answers will vary.
10. Answers will vary. They are noticing that in some ways Janice is as much an outsider as they are. Yes, it indicates growth in character for them. It is especially a growth in character for Leslie who seemed unable to sympathize with Janice earlier in the story.
11. What seems most important to Jess’s mother and older sisters is that the family looks nice and that no one in the church looks down on them. Jess’s older sisters “flounce down the entire length of the aisle” to the first pew, making sure everyone notices them and is jealous.
12. Leslie notes that she doesn’t believe the Bible, but thinks the story of Christ’s death and resurrection is beautiful. Jess and May Belle on the other hand believe the Bible, but find the Easter story frightening. In this scene we learn that Leslie is not a believer, although she seems ready to believe. Jess is a believer, but he seems embarrassed to talk about it with Leslie.
13. Jess seems embarrassed. When Jess talks about what he believes he “reaches down into the deepest put of his mind.” “He felt hot and caught by her voice.” “He dropped his gaze.” He “began to fiddle with the raveled edge” of the gunny-sack. Answers will vary. Jess may connect churchgoing and church people with the way his family acts in church. He may be unwilling to share this part of himself with Leslie because he is so embarrassed by previous church experiences with his family.

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14. Answers will vary. Repeating the question “What’s going to happen if you die?” leads readers to expect that someone dies by the end of the story.

Dig Deeper:

15. May Belle believes that if you don’t believe the Bible, “God’ll damn you to hell when you die.” Answers will vary.

16. a. God says that Jesus is his son. b. When asked if he is “the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One,” Jesus responds “I am.” c. God sent his son into the world to save the world. (John 3:16, 17) He was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear again “to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:28) d. Whoever believes in Jesus is promised eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus says that he is going to prepare rooms for us in his Father’s house, and “No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:1–6) Considering what is taught in these verses, May Belle is right about what she believes as far as she takes it. She says we must believe the Bible (or rather, what is written in the Bible) and that includes believing the words in these verses. A more exact phrasing might be that we must believe what the Bible has to say about Jesus.

Chapters 9–11

Vocabulary:

Answers will vary, but should be similar to the following. 1. normal; 2. dry; 3. rhythmically; 4. happily; 5. nice; 6. intensely; 7. enslaved

Questions:

1. All the rain has turned the dry creek into a wide, fast-flowing stream.
2. Jess fears crossing the stream, and he fears the darkness of the pine grove.
3. Jess is bothered about the fact that no matter how high the creek rises Leslie will still want to cross it. He also is bothered by the fact that he has these fears.
4. When she is barely awake he asks her permission so that she won’t clearly understand what is being asked of her. He then tells May Belle that he is going and tells her to tell their mother.
5. By “liberated woman” she means that she will not be bound by traditional male/female roles and rules. She is liberated from these rules. These rules would say that men must pay for the meals on a date. By saying this she gets Jess out of a tight spot because he has no money with him.
6. The display depicts Indians disguised in buffalo skins scaring a herd of buffalo into stampeding over a cliff to their deaths. Other Indians are waiting below to butcher and skin them. Jess feels “a frightening sense of kinship” with it. It is a “three-dimensional nightmare version of some of his own drawings.” Jess doesn’t like it.
7. Leslie has died and Jess has been missing all day. His mother thought that Jess had died, too. She burst into tears when she sees that he is alive.
8. Jess reacts with an outburst of denial and takes off running down the road. He was “afraid to stop. Knowing somehow that running was the only thing that could keep Leslie from being dead.
9. He begins to imagine a conversation about his day, but then he tells Leslie he’s sorry he didn’t ask her along, and he tells her he was scared to go to Terabithia that morning.

Thinking About the Story:

10. Answers will vary. Jess does not want Leslie to think he is afraid.
11. Answers will vary. Jess wishes that he wasn’t afraid. He admires Leslie’s lack of fears and wishes that he could be so fearless.
12. Answers will vary. The pine grove was a sacred place in Terabithia—the place Leslie and Jess went only in times of greatest joy or sorrow. The author wants to stress how the gallery is a similarly sacred place. Ironically, this experience should be a time of great joy for Jess, but in retrospect, it becomes a time of great sorrow because it is the day of Leslie’s death.
13. Some of the foreshadowing includes the following: The flooded creek bed makes Jess think of the way the water swept away the chariots of the Egyptians in the movie *The Ten Commandments*. When Jess looked up at the rope twisted around the branch of the crab apple tree his stomach felt cold. While in the pine grove Jess was shivering, “whether from the cold or the place, he didn’t know.” The author refers to the graceful run of Leslie’s “that neither mud nor water could defeat.” The one exhibit the author specifically details is the display with the buffalo plunging to their deaths.
14. Answers will vary. He is in shock, or numb with pain and he hasn’t really accepted Leslie’s death yet.
15. Answers will vary. Perhaps Jess never has thought of Leslie as a little girl. Also, Jess is still denying the fact of Leslie’s death. He may feel that if he keeps denying it, she may not be gone.

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Dig Deeper:

16. Answers will vary.

17. a. God created us and knows how long we shall live before our lives even begin. b. Death is described as that moment when “the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.” Death has been conquered. c. There is home for believers in heaven—a home prepared for us by God—where we will go when we die. d. We have been given hope that through death we will enter into the inheritance kept in heaven for us.

Chapters 12 & 13

Vocabulary:

1. verb; incinerated a corpse; 2. noun; fortified place or fortress; 3. verb; squeezing or compressing; 4. noun; movement of a group of persons, vehicles, or objects in an orderly, formal manner; 5. verb; to recommend or represent as worthy or qualified; 6. noun; one that lives by preying on or victimizing others; 7. noun; special attention or effort

Questions:

1. Jess experiences the following thoughts and emotions while at the Burkes': He thought it was weird to see all these adults crying. He felt that he would become more important at school because his best friend had died. He was curious about how Leslie might look when dead. He felt smothered. He felt that everyone was being selfish, that they were only crying for themselves, not for Leslie. He felt alone. He left the Burkes, became angry, and threw his paints and paper in the creek.

2. Jess's father says “God ain't gonna send any little girls to hell.”

3. May Belle follows Jess because she doesn't want him to be lonesome.

4. Jess tells her that everyone gets scared sometime and she shouldn't be ashamed. He admits that even he was scared while trying to help her.

5. Jess realizes that even Leslie got scared sometimes.

6. Jess notices that they have already removed Leslie's desk.

7. Mrs. Myers expresses her sympathy for Jess and shares how she felt when her husband died. She understands that Jess will never forget Leslie.

8. The Burkes decide to move away from Lark Creek.

Thinking About the Story:

9. Answers will vary. Jess's world—his “old self”—was “a stupid, weird little kid who drew funny pictures and chased around a cow field trying to act big—trying to hide a whole mob of foolish little fears running riot inside his gut.” Leslie's world was a world of imagination and beauty. Leslie did not hide behind her fears. She did not pretend to be something she wasn't in order to fit in. Jess has been learning to challenge his fears. He has stopped caring what other people think of him. He is learning to be imaginative, but he has not yet completely conquered his fears.

10. Answers will vary. This is the first conversation we see between Jess and his father. It comforts and strengthens Jess and makes him feel bold. It is a moment of growth for Jess, and perhaps a signal that he and his father can have a closer relationship.

11. These words are similar to Jesus words on the cross: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46) These words are also used in many funeral services. In this context these words indicate that Jess is letting go of Leslie. He has accepted her death and is giving her over to God.

12. A tiny bit of peace enters the chaos Jess feels. Answers will vary. Jess has accepted Leslie's death. “Like a single bird across a storm-cloud sky, a tiny peace winged its way through the chaos inside his body.”

13. Answers will vary.

14. Jess sees that Leslie has given him “vision and strength.” She has tried to “push back the walls of his mind.” She had “taken him from the cow pasture and turned him into a king.”

15. Jess believes he must pay back the world “in beauty and caring what Leslie loaned him in vision and strength.” At the end of the book he brings May Belle into Terabithia and begins to spark her imagination.

Dig Deeper:

16. Answers will vary. Jess is building a bridge of understanding between himself and May Belle. He is sharing a secret part of himself with her. He is also helping her build a bridge to a world of imagination. He is helping her use her imagination and doing for her what Leslie did for him. Jess has become the bridge for May Belle to enter Terabithia.

17. Answers will vary. Other bridges that have been built include the bridge between Jess and Mrs. Myers and between Jess and his father.