

An Educator’s Guide for

The Last Grand Adventure

By Rebecca Behrens

Common Core State Standards Aligned
for Grades 4–7

About This Book

Twelve-year-old Bea finds herself on a unique road trip with her grandmother, as they search for her grandmother’s long lost sister—the legendary Amelia Earhart—in this charming and poignant novel from the author of *When Audrey Met Alice* and *Summer of Lost and Found*.

It’s the summer of 1967—and Bea’s world has been shaken up. Her mother is off in San Francisco, while her father has remarried in Los Angeles, adding a stepmom and younger stepsister to the mix. Bea, unsure of all the change happening around her, feels stuck.

So when her grandmother, Pidge, moves to a retirement community, Bea agrees to visit and help her adjust. But it turns out her grandmother isn’t interested in “settling in”—what Pidge really wants is to hop a train to Atchison, Kansas, where she believes she’ll be reunited with her long-missing older sister: Amelia Earhart. And she wants Bea to be her sidekick on this secret trip.

At first, Bea thinks her grandmother’s plan sounds a little crazy. But Pidge does have thirty years of mysterious letters, written in “Meelie’s” unmistakable voice, all promising to reunite. This journey might be just the adventure Bea needs. . . .

Bea and Pidge set off on their quest to reach Amelia. But getting halfway across the country proves to be far more of an adventure than either bargained for. Their journey takes them from the desert to the heartland, in planes, trains, and automobiles. And their search just might lead to surprising truths about their family—and each other.

About the Author

Rebecca Behrens grew up in Wisconsin, studied in Chicago, and now lives with her husband in New York City. A former textbook editor, Rebecca loves writing and reading about kids full of moxie and places full of history. She is the author of the middle-grade novels *When Audrey Met Alice*, which *BookPage* called “a terrific work of blended realistic and historical fiction,” and *Summer of Lost and Found*, which *Kirkus* praised as “a good find indeed.” Visit her online at www.rebeccabehrens.com.



Prereading Questions and Scavenger Hunt Activity: Introducing *The Last Grand Adventure*

When students first receive copies of *The Last Grand Adventure*, ask them to follow the steps below to explore the text.

Step one: Look at the front and back covers of the text. Based on the meanings of words and images on the covers, what do you think this book will be about?

Step two: The title *The Last Grand Adventure* tells readers that in this text, Bea will go on an adventure. Brainstorm at least two predictions about what will happen to Bea over the course of *The Last Grand Adventure*.

Step three: The summary description of *The Last Grand Adventure* just inside the book's jacket states that the book will contain letters from Amelia Earhart's point of view. Look through *The Last Grand Adventure* for the letters in cursive font. According to the words that you find, what will this book reveal to you about Amelia Earhart? Cite some of the words you found as textual evidence.

The questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 4)

Teaching Strategies: Comprehension questions, comprehension activities, and enrichment activities for *The Last Grand Adventure*

Comprehension Questions

Here are some ways in which the comprehension questions below could be integrated into a lesson:

- As an individual student “do now” or “bell-ringer” activity
- As informal one-on-one discussion in pairs
- As a formal small-group discussion, wherein students are assigned roles and/or questions
- As an informal class discussion
- As a formal written assignment; individual students could be assigned different questions to answer and share with the whole group
- As part of a written quiz
- As a written homework assignment

Chapter One

1. What is Bea's backstory in chapter one? What do we learn about her personality? What do we know about her family life? How does Bea feel about where she is?
2. How does Bea feel about being at Disneyland? How does she feel about Tomorrowland in particular?
3. What are the two journals that Bea keeps? How does she feel about each of them?
4. What do you predict will happen to Bea next?

Chapter Two

1. What are Bea's first impressions of her grandmother and her grandmother's home? Use details to support your answer.
2. How does Bea feel about her family leaving Pidge's house?

3. What do we learn about Bea’s Earhart family history in chapter two?
4. How does Bea feel when her grandmother tells her to pack a bag? What does this tell you about her character?

Chapter Three

1. On page 23, Bea describes the food stocked in the kitchen. What does this tell you about the time in which they live? How is their diet similar to and different from what you eat?
2. Pidge shares the first letter from Meelie in this chapter. What does the letter tell you about Meelie’s personality? What does it tell you about her relationship with Pidge?
3. What historical details about Amelia Earhart do you learn in this chapter?
4. How does Bea feel about going on an adventure? How do you know?

Chapter Four

1. What do Bea’s journal entries tell you about her feelings about leaving with Pidge? What do they show you about her character?
2. What effect does Meelie’s letter have on Bea’s feelings about adventures?
3. What details about Pidge and Meelie do you learn from Pidge’s conversations with Snooky?
4. How does Bea feel at the end of this chapter?

Chapter Five

1. How does Bea feel when she is alone on the train? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Bea meets another young traveler, Ruth, while waiting for Pidge. Whom is Ruth traveling with? How does she feel about being on the train? How is she similar to, and different from, Bea?
3. What effect does meeting Ruth have on Bea?
4. What discovery does Bea make at the end of the chapter? How does she feel about it?

Chapter Six

1. What decision does Bea make on page 83? How does the phrase “none of those options were any less so” help you understand why she made that decision?
2. After dinner, how have Bea’s feelings about being on the train changed? Find evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. How does Meelie’s letter make Bea “feel better about my own nerves”?
4. What is the relationship between Bea and Pidge like at the end of this chapter? Did it change from the beginning?

Chapter Seven

1. How does Bea think her mother will feel about Bea and Pidge’s adventure? How does she think it will change their relationship?
2. On pages 120–21, Bea is writing in her journals. How has her writing changed? Which journal is she writing in more?
3. On page 123, Pidge talks about her grandfather’s advice to use your eyes to “see and remember.” How does this relate to how Bea uses her camera?

4. Bea finds Ruth again in this chapter. What things do the two girls have in common? How are their lives different?

Chapter Eight

1. How does Bea feel when the conductor catches them? What does that experience teach her about her past worries?
2. How does Bea describe Lamy, New Mexico?
3. What decision does Bea make on 144? How does Amelia's story help her make that decision?
4. Bea describes the desert landscape throughout chapter eight. What are some details of the environment? How does Bea feel about it?

Chapter Nine

1. How does Bea describe the driver and the car? What do the details tell you about Margo and her personality?
2. How does Bea feel about riding in the Rolling Stone?
3. On page 159, Margo paints Bea in her picture. How does Bea describe the painting? How does she feel about being included in it?
4. On page 160, Pidge "weighed each word like the man at the deli counter weighed the sandwich meat." What does the careful way in which she tells their story tell about her feelings? Why does Bea feel like she would tell their story differently?

Chapter Ten

1. How does Bea describe Santa Fe? How does she feel about visiting that city?
2. On page 162, Bea says, "I had Earhart eyes and I was using them to see." What does this tell you about her character? Has she changed from the beginning of the story? Explain.
3. Why is buying the bracelets so significant to Bea? Use evidence from the text in your answer.
4. How do Bea and Pidge feel when Margo leaves?

Chapter Eleven

1. On pages 173–74, Bea describes how the mealtime traditions of her family have changed. How does she feel about sharing dinner with her family? What does she mean when she compares their family unit to a solution that can't mix?
2. How does Bea feel during the phone call with her family? Does she have an easy or a difficult time talking with her father?
3. How does Sally affect how Bea communicates with her parents?
4. How does Bea feel about being a sister? Use evidence from pages 179–80 to support your answer.

Chapter Twelve

1. How do Bea and Pidge feel about staying overnight in the bus station?
2. On page 183, Bea says, "Perhaps the nervous anticipation was part of [the journey's] fun." How have Bea's feelings about travel and adventure changed from the beginning of the story?
3. How does Meelie's letter change the way Bea thinks about her relationship with Sally?
4. How does Bea's worry journal help her understand a worry she can't quite "capture"?

Chapter Thirteen

1. Bea describes the inside of the waiting room again at the start of chapter thirteen. How has her description changed? What do the details tell you about her feelings?
2. How does Bea feel when she wakes up and finds Pidge gone? What does it tell you about her character, and her relationship with Pidge?
3. How does “flying” help Pidge feel connected with her sister? How does this scene connect with the letters Meelie has written Pidge?
4. How has the relationship between Bea and Pidge changed from the start of *The Last Grand Adventure* to this point in the story?

Chapter Fourteen

1. How does Bea describe the other people on the bus? What do they tell you about the time period in which the story takes place?
2. Bea describes some of the landscape on pages 208–9. What details does she use? How does she feel about the environment around her, and has she always felt that way?
3. On pages 209, Bea reads the newspaper. What do the headlines tell you about the time period? How does Bea feel about the news she reads?
4. In this chapter, Bea reads the last letter from Meelie. What does it tell you about the meeting she has planned with Pidge? What details does it share about Amelia Earhart’s life and disappearance?

Chapter Fifteen

1. How does Bea feel when Pidge won’t stir at the beginning of the chapter? What previous experience does this remind her of?
2. How do Bea and Pidge feel when they realize the letters are gone? Do either of their reactions surprise you? Why or why not?
3. How does Bea describe the diner? What does *bon voyage* mean? Why do you think the author chose this name for the diner?
4. On page 236, Bea wonders if it is “the end of the adventure.” How does she feel about that possibility? What does her reaction tell you about her character?

Chapter Sixteen

1. The title for this chapter is “Serendipity.” What are the possible meanings of that title?
2. On page 239, Bea describes Sally’s voice as bubbling with “sweet enthusiasm.” How have her feelings toward Sally changed from the previous phone call in chapter eight?
3. How does Bea take action on page 243? Do you think Bea in chapter one would have made the same decision? Explain.
4. How does Pidge feel about flying? How does Bea feel about flying?

Chapter Seventeen

1. “Courage is the price” is a quotation from Amelia Earhart. What do you think it means? Why might the author have chosen to use it as the title for this chapter?
2. How do Meelie’s letters affect how Bea feels about flying? Cite evidence from page 253 in your answer.

3. How do Bea and Pidge feel once the plane is up in the air?
4. How does Bea describe what she sees below the plane?

Chapter Eighteen

1. What does Bea think of first when the plane experiences trouble? Does this surprise you?
2. Who does Pidge say helped them get the plane down safely? How does Bea feel about this?
3. How has Bea changed from the start of *The Last Grand Adventure* to this point in the story?
4. Reread page 263. How has Bea and Pidge's relationship changed from the start of the story to this point?

Chapter Nineteen

1. On page 265, Bea asks the adults for help. How does she explain why she asked? Did her "boldness" surprise you—why or why not?
2. Bea describes their adventure so far on page 267. How does she feel about what they've done? Do her feelings surprise you? Explain.
3. How does Bea feel as she watches the Wendell sisters play? How does Pidge feel? Use evidence from the text to support your answers.
4. How does Bea feel the morning they leave for Atchison? How are her feelings different than when she and Pidge started out on the other legs of their journey?

Chapter Twenty

1. How does Bea describe Atchison, Kansas? Do any details surprise her?
2. How do Pidge's actions in this chapter tell you about her feelings?
3. How does Bea feel when the door to the Atchison home opens? What do you think her feelings mean?
4. What do you predict will happen next in the story?

Chapter Twenty-One

1. How does Bea describe the house in Atchison? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. By the middle of the chapter, Pidge is no longer speaking. What do her actions tell about her feelings?
3. Who does Bea speak with on the phone at the end of chapter twenty-one? How does she feel about this?
4. What does Bea find on the windowsill on page 291? What does she think this means?

Chapter Twenty-Two

1. Pidge speaks a lot about the letters on pages 293–94. What do you think she means when she says, "I just wanted, so badly, for it all to be real"?
2. On page 296, Bea says, "This trip was the best thing that had ever happened to me." Would Bea from chapter one have felt the same way? How has she changed from the beginning of the story to this point?
3. How does Pidge feel at the end of chapter twenty-two?
4. Why do you think the author titled this chapter "Flight Paths"?

Chapter Twenty-Three

1. How does Bea feel about Sally and Julie having gone to look for her? How is that similar to what she and Pidge had been doing? How is it different?
2. Bea describes when her other family members arrive in Kansas. How is this reunion different from their good-byes at Pidge's home in chapter two?
3. On page 305, Bea determines that she won't be able to know where the letters are really from. How does she feel about the letters remaining a mystery? Do you feel the same or differently?
4. How has Bea's relationship with Sally changed by the end of chapter twenty-three?

Author's Note

1. What inspired the author to write *The Last Grand Adventure*?
2. What does the Author's Note tell about the events of 1967?
3. What does the Author's Note tell about Amelia Earhart's life and accomplishments?
4. What theories does the author share about Amelia Earhart's disappearance? What do you think happened to Amelia Earhart?

The questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4–6.3) (W.4.9a) (SL.4–7.1)

Comprehension Activities

Found Poems and Theme(s)

One creative way to reinforce the meaning of key vocabulary words and ideas and to explore a literary work's theme(s) is by having students write Found Poems. Found Poems can be made when students engage in collaborative discussions in which they identify, choose, and organize ideas, words, and phrases from a text, and then compose them into a poem that reviews the text's ideas and synthesizes learning. This synthesis results in students finding a theme. Found Poems allow students to practice their reading-literature, writing, and speaking and listening skills.

Step one: Each individual student chooses and writes down at least ten words, phrases, and quotations from *The Last Grand Adventure*. Students should cite this textual evidence with page numbers from the text, although citations will not appear in Found Poems.

Step two: Students begin organizing those ten words, phrases, and quotations into an outline of a Found Poem. For this and each subsequent step students could work individually, or could engage in a collaborative discussion with a partner or a small group to "share" or "trade" words, phrases, and quotations and then to organize them. Ideally, Found Poems will be tied to key words and important ideas in the text.

Step three: Students return to the text and collect additional words to fill in gaps in the outlined poem that they just wrote. Remember, in Found Poems students can only use words that come from the text!

Step four: Students resume and finish writing their Found Poems about *The Last Grand Adventure*.

Step five: Students share their Found Poems with the class. Students may do so by volunteering to read their Found Poems to the whole class, or sharing them with another student. Another option for sharing

is to ask all students to write their Found Poems on large posters, which can be hung up throughout the classroom. Afterward, students can walk around between Found Poems as if in a gallery.

Step six: Through reflection and paraphrasing, students review the key words and important ideas expressed in the shared Found Poems. In doing so, students are able to identify a literary work's theme(s). Students may do so through oral discussion or written reflection.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 2, 4) (SL.4–7.1)

Character Charts and Debate about Change over Time

This two-part activity consists of students completing the character chart on the next page to identify main ideas and supporting details about the main characters in *The Last Grand Adventure* to practice reading literature and writing skills, and afterward debating about which character changed the most over time. The debate allows students to practice speaking and listening skills.

Step one: Using *The Last Grand Adventure*, students working independently, in small groups, or as a whole class should complete both or an assigned row of the chart on the next page.

Step two: Whole-class review of the chart on the next page.

Step three: While reviewing their completed chart below, students should rank characters according to who changed the most over time based on the chart's details. (Teachers could either ask students to rank all the characters or simply to choose and rank the top three.)

Step four: In small groups or as a whole class, students should debate the specific question: Which character changed the most over time in *The Last Grand Adventure*?

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4–6.3) (W.4–5.9a) (SL.4–7.1)

***The Last Grand Adventure* Comprehension and Activity Guide**
Character Chart

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Use the character chart below to identify main actions and supporting details about the characters in *The Last Grand Adventure*. Once you finish, look back at the main actions and details and think about which character(s) changed the most. Afterward, you will debate with other students about which character changed the most over time in *The Last Grand Adventure*.

| Character's Name | Biographical Information | Major actions taken by the character (cite textual evidence with page numbers) | Important quotations said by this character (cite textual evidence with page numbers) |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Beatrice "Bea" | | | |
| Bea's grandmother, Muriel "Pidge" | | | |
| Amelia Earhart "Meelie" | | | |

(Comparing and Contrasting) Character Charts

Character charts are graphic organizers that help students to think deeply about the characters that they read about, as well as supporting details about them. When made twice, toward the beginning and the end of reading a text, character charts can be used to compare and contrast details about a character and track changes in him or her over time. Character charts allow students to practice their reading-literature skills.

Step one: Creating a character chart for Bea toward the beginning of *The Last Grand Adventure*. Ask students to write Bea's name at the center of a piece of paper. Then ask students to read or review chapter one of *The Last Grand Adventure* and to find and cite textual evidence/details about Bea that help us understand her as a character toward the beginning of the book.

Step two: Creating a character chart for Bea at or toward the end of *The Last Grand Adventure*. Ask students to write Bea's name at the center of a piece of paper. Then ask students to read or review chapters twenty-two and twenty-three of *The Last Grand Adventure* and find and cite textual evidence/details about Bea that help us to understand her as a character at the end of the book.

Step three: Comparing and contrasting character charts to see change in Bea over time. Ask students to compare and contrast their two identity charts about Bea, to find answers to the following questions: What details about Bea were the same at the beginning and the end of the text? What details were different at the beginning and end of the text? How and why did Bea change over time?

Step four: Optional variation: Creating a character chart for another character in *The Last Grand Adventure*.

Ask students to write the name of another character in *The Last Grand Adventure* at the center of a piece of paper. Possible characters include: Pidge; Meelie; Beatrice's mother, Sheila; Beatrice's father, Ken; Beatrice's stepsister, Sally; Neta Snook; Ruth Vaughan; Margo; Roscoe; Suzie and Sara Wendell. Then ask students to look back at *The Last Grand Adventure* and find details about that character that help us to understand her or him. Finally, ask students to compare and contrast the identity chart that they made for Bea with that of the other character. Ask students to consider the following questions: What details are similar between Bea and the other character? What details are different between them? How did Bea and the other character interact during *The Last Grand Adventure*? In your opinion, did the interaction between Bea and the other character change either or both of them over time—and if so, how and why?

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4–6.3) (W.4–5.9a)

Point of View in *The Last Grand Adventure*

The Last Grand Adventure was written from Bea's first-person point of view, as well as that of Meelie, through her letters.

Step one: To establish student understanding of point of view, discuss the following questions as a class:

1. What is point of view? From whose point(s) of view is most of *The Last Grand Adventure* written?
2. What is narrative voice? Why do you think the author of *The Last Grand Adventure* chose to write the book in first-person narrative voice?
3. Parts of *The Last Grand Adventure* are written in the point of view and narrative voice of Amelia Earhart. (Five letters from Meelie to Pidge are found in chapters three, four, six, twelve, and fourteen.) Why do you think the author of *The Last Grand Adventure* chose to create these fictional letters?
4. How did having Bea and Meelie as narrators in *The Last Grand Adventure* shape the story's content and style?
5. What was different about Bea and Meelie as narrators in *The Last Grand Adventure*? What was similar about them as narrators?

Step two: Encourage students to imagine and think aloud about how this book might be different if it all were told from another point of view (such as Pidge's, Bea's mom's, Sally's, or Julie's point of view). As a class, select a part from one chapter of the book and brainstorm ideas about how it might look from a different character's point of view.

Step three: Have each student select a pivotal part of a chapter and rewrite it as seen through the eyes of a different character. (For example, Pidge's point of view in chapter eight is likely different from Bea's point of view of the same actions. Think about how she would see and describe the events from her own point of view.)

Step four: Ask students to share their rewritten pivotal parts of a chapter with each other.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.6)

Turning-Point Discussion

An important literary concept is the turning point, and an important reading-literature skill is to analyze how literary elements interact to produce a turning point. To help students to understand these concepts and practice reading-literature skills, engage them in a discussion about the turning point in *The Last Grand Adventure*.

Step one: Define *turning point* and identify the general area where the turning point happens in *The Last Grand Adventure* to students. A turning point is needed in literature to advance the plot and bring it close to its resolution. *Turning point* refers to actions taken by a character that change the direction of her or his life, affect the lives of others, and/or change the course of history. *The Last Grand Adventure*'s turning point occurs in chapter sixteen, when Bea tells Roscoe that she and Pidge will fly to Atchison with him.

Step two: To check students' ability to identify the turning point, ask students to look back at *The Last Grand Adventure* and identify a sentence in chapter sixteen that shows that Bea is at her turning point. Ask two or three student volunteers to read the sentences that they identified. Write their possible turning-point sentences on the whiteboard or chalkboard. Discuss their possible turning-point sentences, and make a conclusion about what the best turning-point sentence is, as a whole class.

Step three: Explain further to students how literary works build up to a turning point, using literary

elements. Numerous literary elements are used to make a turning point for Bea: for example, other chapters build up to the turning point, and a specific series of events lead to Bea’s decision to act as she does. In the last chapters of *The Last Grand Adventure* that follow the turning point, Bea’s actions change the lives of other characters—and change her own life. A simplified way to have students think about this structure is that books are made up of parts before, at, and after turning points.

Step four: To check for students’ understanding of literary elements that help build up to the turning point of *The Last Grand Adventure*, ask students to return to the book—and to identify the parts before, at, and after its turning point. To do so, students may want to skim earlier and later chapters, and to closely read chapters sixteen through nineteen. As they reread the text, ask students to look for and take notes about how chapters one through fifteen build up before the turning point; how the specific series of events in chapters sixteen through nineteen show Bea at her turning point; and how the effects after the turning point are found in chapters twenty to twenty-three.

Step five: Discuss students’ notes as a whole class. On the whiteboard or chalkboard, draw a three-column chart labeled “before the turning point,” “at the turning point,” and “after the turning point.” Ask student volunteers to share their notes and record them on the chart for the whole class. Afterward, ask students to use the details on the whole class’s chart to answer comprehension questions related to turning point. Specific questions could include:

1. Overall, how did Bea change over time in *The Last Grand Adventure*?
2. How did chapters one through fifteen lead up to the turning point in chapter sixteen?
3. What happened in chapters sixteen through nineteen as a result of Bea’s turning point?
4. How did Meelie’s letters affect Bea’s change over time and help lead to her turning point?

Step six: To further review turning points and allow for student reflection, ask students to think about their own lives and what turning points they have experienced so far. Ask students to draw a three-column chart labeled “before the turning point,” “at the turning point,” and “after the turning point” in their notebooks. Students should complete these charts about themselves.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.5.5) (RL.6.3, 5) (RL.7.3)

Enrichment Activities

Women in Aviation Research

Although perhaps the most famous, Amelia Earhart was one of many women aviators who broke records and wowed spectators in the twentieth century. Other notable female aviators include: Baroness Raymonde de Laroche, Bessica Raiche, Jacqueline Cochran, Bessie Coleman, Willa Brown, Anita “Neta” Snook, Beryl Markham, Emily Howell Warner, and Sally Ride. Students should research one to learn more about her life, accomplishments, and aircraft. To show their research results, students should create a small poster that shares the information they discovered and includes related photographs or illustrations.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.4–7.7) (W.4–7.8) (W.4–7.10)

Writing Fact and Fiction

As the Author’s Note states, Amelia Earhart; her sister, Muriel; and Anita “Neta” Snook were real people—but the characters in *The Last Grand Adventure* are fictional creations. Ask students to conduct short research projects using credible print and digital sources—including the sources recommended by the author at the end of *The Last Grand Adventure*—to investigate the real Amelia Earhart’s and Anita Snook’s lives. After students have completed this research activity, ask them: How were the real historical figures similar to or different from the characters portrayed in *The Last Grand Adventure*? (In addition, ask higher-level students: How did the author use or alter history in the book?)

Optional variation: Ask students to choose a historical figure, and write a short story that fictionalizes a moment in their subject’s life. Students should perform research using credible print and digital sources about their subject. Tell students that as they research, they should take notes that summarize information, categorize that information, and keep a list of sources. Higher-level students should use citations and a standard format. Have students share their fiction with others and explain which details are based on fact and which are fictionalized. Assessment of this activity could include student completion of a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the facts and fictional account of the historical figure whom they researched.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.7.9) (W.4–7.7, 8, 9a, 10)

Make an Amelia Earhart Landmark Map Activity

The five letters from “Meelie” and the Author’s Note tell of some of the significant places in Amelia Earhart’s life, career, and disappearance: Atchison, Kansas; the Missouri River; Los Angeles, California; the Atlantic Ocean; Wales and Ireland; the Pacific Ocean; Honolulu, Hawaii; Oakland, CA; Miami, Florida; Lae, New Guinea; Howland Island; Nikumaroro (Gardner Island). In this activity, ask students to create their own map (on paper or digitally) of selected Amelia Earhart landmarks. They may use print and online resources to research the locations of the landmarks. When they have completed their maps, have students compare and contrast their maps, explaining why they chose the landmarks they did and why they are important places in Earhart’s life or career.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RH 6–8.7)

Narrative Letter from Pidge to Meelie

At the end of *The Last Grand Adventure*, Pidge leaves an envelope, labeled ALWAYS MY SISTER, in Meelie’s old bedroom (page 303). In this activity, students imagine what that letter contains. Students should start this activity by rereading some or all of Meelie’s letters throughout *The Last Grand Adventure* in order to remind themselves of the sisters’ correspondence. (The letters appear in chapters three, four, six, twelve, and fourteen.) Then students should write their own imagined narrative letter to Meelie from Pidge’s perspective. Letter writing allows students to practice their narrative writing skills. Specifically, students should practice narrative writing skills by following the steps below.

Step one: Introduce Pidge as the letter’s narrator.

Step two: Establish the context of the letter by using precise words, descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

Step three: When they have finished a draft of their narrative letters, students should peer edit, revise, and share them with one another.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.4–7.3, 4, 5, 10) (W.5–7.3)

Readers’ Theater Activity

Readers’ Theater is an activity in which small groups of students present a performance about key terms, ideas, themes, or conflicts in a text. Readers’ Theater is also very useful for inspiring students to closely read challenging text, as well as for assessing their comprehension. In this activity, small groups of students present small chunks of textual evidence to their peers. Readers’ Theater allows students to practice their reading-literature, writing, and speaking and listening skills.

Step One: Planning Readers’ Theater

The Last Grand Adventure contains cursive letters from “Meelie” to Pidge, which contain many biographical details about Amelia Earhart. Due to the complexity of reading these passages, dividing students into small groups and assigning each group one passage for Readers’ Theater could enable all students to better understand the written account. Alternately, this activity also works well when groups of students choose passages from the text based on key terms, ideas, themes, or conflicts. Some ideas and themes from *The Last Grand Adventure* that students could focus on include family dynamics; isolation and loneliness; anxiety and worries; adventure and bravery; and the meaning of home.

Step Two: Reviewing Chosen or Assigned Passages

Small groups of students must reread and review the passage that they chose or were assigned. Students should underline the words that stand out to them as they read. It may be helpful to have students read the passages twice—once individually and once together as a group to guarantee that all group members are familiar with the passage.

Step Three: Writing and Planning Readers’ Theater Pieces

After rereading and reviewing text passages, small groups should discuss the passage. Their focus should be on identifying the words and ideas that seem most important, and that they want to share with the class. Once they have done so, they should begin preparing their Readers’ Theater performance using the words and ideas that they identified. The goal of their performances is to use specific language from the text passage to represent its most important ideas.

Step Four: Performing of Readers’ Theater pieces

Step Five: Reflecting on Readers’ Theater

After all small groups have performed Readers’ Theater pieces, ask students to reflect on what they heard and saw. Discuss: How did each group’s performance help them to better understand the letter?

Alternately, if small groups of students chose passages from the text based on key terms, ideas, themes, or conflicts, which key terms, ideas, themes, or conflicts came up and stood out to them in the small group performances? Ask students to consider: Were those terms, ideas, themes, or conflicts the most important ones in *The Last Grand Adventure*? Why or why not?

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 4) (SL.4–7.1)

Earhart Quotations and Essay Activity

Throughout *The Last Grand Adventure*, Bea reads letters that contain information about and quotations from Amelia Earhart. Pidge also shares some real Earhart wisdom in her dialogue. In this activity, students will break down, explain, react to, and connect with the Earhart quotations from *The Last Grand Adventure*. Afterward they will write essays that explain one of the quotations and connect it to their own lives.

Before this activity, determine whether students are advanced enough for each to receive their own different quotation, or if students would better focus on one quotation per group. Depending on what is best for students, either print out all the quotations below in a single handout that each student receives, or cut up handouts into smaller strips containing only one quotation. The quotations:

“Our whole family loved the smell of a book.”

“Oh, Pidge, it’s just like flying!”

“Your eyes were given to you to see things and I want you to see and remember”

“Lots of times when you know what’s the matter, you don’t need to be afraid at all, do you?”

“The girl in brown who walks alone”

“As soon as we left the ground, I knew I myself had to fly” and “I’d die if I didn’t”

“How could I refuse such a shining adventure?”

“Hooray for the last grand adventure! I wish I had won, but it was worthwhile anyway.”

“All I wished to do in the world . . . was to be a vagabond—in the air.”

“I’m going because I love life and all it has to offer. I want every opportunity and adventure it can give, and I could never welch on one of them.”

“Merely for the fun of it”

“After midnight, the moon set, and I was alone with the stars. I have often said that the lure of flying is the lure of beauty . . .”

“WE KNEW YOU COULD DO IT AND NOW YOU HAVE STOP CHEERS CONGRATULATIONS MUCH LOVE MOTHER AND MURIEL”

“The best mascot is a good mechanic!”

“You have scored again . . . [and] shown even the ‘doubting Thomases’ that aviation is a science which cannot be limited to men only”

“Dare to live”

Step one: Divide students into small groups of two or three. Distribute a handout of all of the quotations or a strip with just one quotation to each student. Instruct students that in their small groups, they will break down, explain, react to, and connect with the Earhart quotations from *The Last Grand Adventure*.

Step two: In small groups, students should begin by reading the quotation that they received silently and independently. As they read, they should annotate it with their thoughts and/or questions about it.

Step three: In small groups, students should read a quotation aloud. Afterward, students should discuss the quotation together. What words does the quotation contain? What does the quotation mean? What do you think about the quotation? How does it connect with your life? Students should repeat this for each quotation.

Step four: Students should take time to write down a record of what they discussed in their small groups. Together with their discussions, their notes will work as prewriting for their essays. Then students will write essays that explain one of the Earhart quotations and connect it to their own lives. Essays should clearly state the quotation, explain what it means, and include the student's reaction to it—whether or not the essay writer agrees with it—and why. Essays should also connect the quotation to their lives and/or the world.

Step four: Students should peer edit, revise, and share their essays.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.4–7.4, 5, 10)

Writing a News Article Activity

Throughout *The Last Grand Adventure*, Bea mentions news articles her mother has researched and written, as well as the news headlines she sees throughout the trip. A great activity is to ask students to write their own news articles further imagining how Bea and Pidge's adventure might be reported. Writing their own news articles allows students to practice their research and writing skills.

Step one: Explain to students that news articles are designed to be informative and should include basic information about who, what, where, how, and when. Most contain writing elements such as a hook to interest the reader at the beginning, an introduction, body paragraphs with quotations, and conclusions. Next, show students a news article. Together with students, identify where the basic information and writing elements are in that news article.

Step two: Give students time to find a news article on their own. Ask them to find the following basic information in the articles that they find: who, what, where, how, and when. Ask them to find the following writing elements: a hook to interest the reader at the beginning, an introduction, body paragraphs with quotations, and conclusions.

Step three: Students should write their own newspaper articles about Bea and Pidge's adventure that include elements of good news article writing. Elements should include basic information about who, what, where, how, and when, as well as a hook to interest the reader at the beginning, an introduction, body paragraphs with quotations, and a conclusion. (Teachers may want to help scaffold weaker writers by providing a graphic organizer.)

Step four: Students should peer edit, revise, and share their newspaper articles.

The activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.4–7.1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10)

Recommended Print and Online Resources

The following author-recommended resources may help students to learn more about the historical context of *The Last Grand Adventure*. The * symbol denotes resources for young readers. Additional resources are available at: www.rebeccabehrens.com.

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*Hill, Laban Carrick. *America Dreaming: How Youth Changed America in the '60s*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007.

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Rockwell, John, ed. *The New York Times: The Times of the Sixties*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2014.

Unger, Debi and Irwin, eds. *The Times Were A Changin': The Sixties Reader*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998.

Wels, Susan. *Amelia Earhart: The Thrill of It*. Philadelphia: Running Press, 2009.

Websites and online resources about Amelia Earhart and the history included in *The Last Grand Adventure*:

Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum
<http://www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org>

Amelia Earhart: Pioneers of Flight
<http://pioneersofflight.si.edu/content/amelia-earhart-0>

Amelia Earhart Plane: History Detectives
<http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigation/amelia-earhart-plane/>

“Amelia Earhart to her former flight instructor, Neta Snook, 1929”

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/roaring-twenties/resources/amelia-earhart-her-former-flight-instructor-neta-snook-192>

American Experience: Amelia Earhart

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/earhart/>

American Experience: Summer of Love

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/love/>

Anita Neta Snook

<http://www.historynet.com/anita-neta-snook.htm>

“Chat with the Curator: Amelia Earhart and Neta Snook”

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/multimedia#!56431>

History of Newark: The Riots

<http://www.thirteen.org/newark/history3.html>

Teaching the “Long Hot Summer” of 1967 and Beyond

<http://summer67.ku.edu/about/>

The Sixties

<http://www.pbs.org/opb/thesixties/>

The Ninety-Nines, Inc., International Organization of Women Pilots

<http://www.ninety-nines.org>

Revolution '67: Root Causes of Urban Rebellion Lesson Plan

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/revolution67/lesson-plan/>

“Riding High: Santa Fe’s Big Move of 1956,” *Classic Trains Magazine*

<http://ccrail.com/wp-content/uploads/Classic-Trains-Magazine-Winter-2016-Riding-High-Story.pdf>

Vintage Super Chief Advertisement on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI_LoQ4vHDc

“Will the Search for Amelia Earhart Ever End?” *Smithsonian Magazine*

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/will-search-for-amelia-earhart-ever-end-180953646/>

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