

BY *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove



Audrey Penn

CURRICULUM



Introduction: *Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove*

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Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove is unique among pirate novels, based on years of original research into Blackbeard and his fellow pirates, and the legends and lore that have grown around this fascinating figure and this period of American history. The historical and geographical base allows teachers to take a highly entertaining adventure involving four unruly kids, pirates, treasure, ghosts, and a secret tunnel, and teach across the curricula of literature, social sciences, and geography.

Background

The seed for this book lay in Audrey Penn's lifelong captivation with pirates. After discovering that Blackbeard's hideout was on Ocracoke Island, a favorite pirate haunt, and that the island remained peopled by descendents of his and other pirate crews, Ms. Penn spent more than 20 years visiting the island and getting to know the islanders and the descendents of the original pirate families. While she also read everything that she could find on Blackbeard and the pirates of the Outer Banks, she noticed that many of the books contradicted each other, and historians' sources were rarely first-hand.

Through the years of Ms. Penn's visits to Ocracoke, the residents, a notoriously closed group to outsiders, gradually grew to accept and trust her enough to share their family stories, local legends, and the artifacts of their origins. She tracked down 22 authentic pirate crew members' journals that had been handed down through the generations and had never before been seen by any historian, journalist, or writer. Because of her friendships with the islanders, this book was developed and written with the blessing of all who contributed. *Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove* is a love letter to Ocracoke Island—the history, the residents, and the amazing community that they have created and nurtured on this idyllic island off the coast of North Carolina.

Curriculum

Academic standards serve as the framework for teaching and learning in the American classroom. Standards are the focus of educational reform and the criteria that define accountability—the things students are supposed to know and be able to do. This curriculum for *Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove* has been designed to help students meet current academic standards.

Language arts standards within this curriculum span from reading comprehension to areas of writing. Reading comprehension has been combined with literary response and analysis, which allows students to use critical thinking strategies. This combined section serves to reinforce the plot, raising an awareness that will become important later in the novel, while analyzing what readers have already read and helping them to think beyond the text.

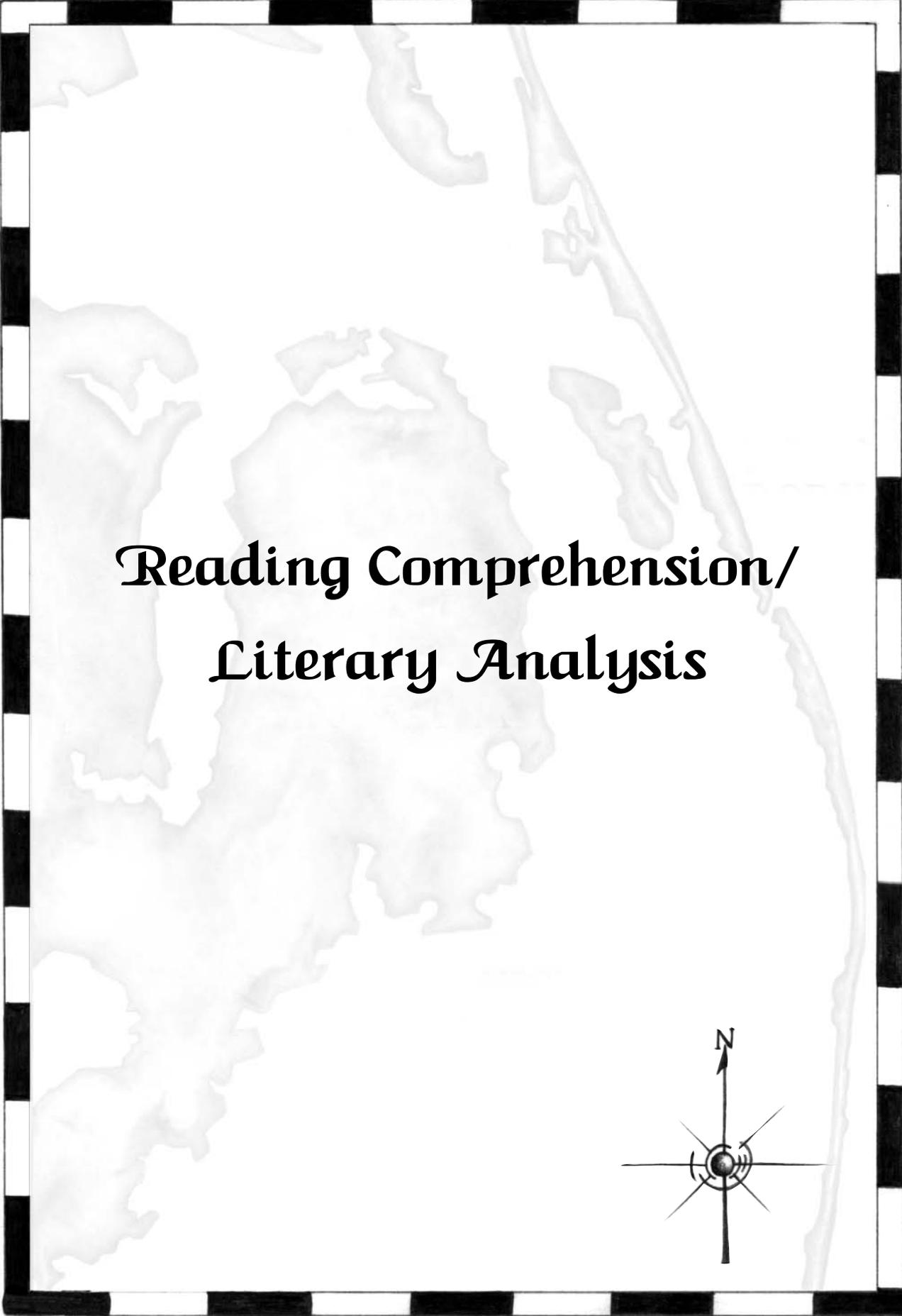
There is a vocabulary section that will enhance students' knowledge of unfamiliar words and encourage them to use a dictionary to look up the meaning and pronunciation. The vocabulary section will also bring to the students' attention that many words have multiple meanings, and illustrate the use of context in a novel for help in defining the words.

The social science questions help bring the attention of the students to the social and political history and geographical facts that are embedded in the novel. Most students will be learning for the first time about a place that has been sheltered, until recently, from the rest of the country. Students will learn and acknowledge the cultural differences between the islanders and the people whom students are familiar with.

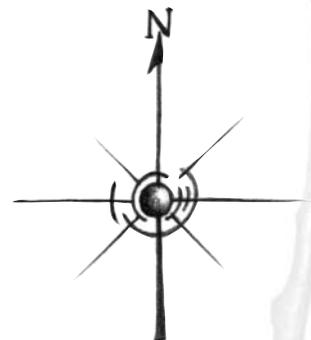
There are essay questions designed to help students relate the story to their own lives based on what they have learned by reading the novel. The type of community that readers encounter in this novel is tiny and isolated, with a strong sense of itself and a history that is handed down through the generations—a type of community that is quickly disappearing from the American landscape. Some essay questions ask students to compare the novel's setting and characters to the community and people they know. Other essay questions bring attention to ethical dilemmas that the characters in the novel face and help the students develop a sense of their own ethical views.

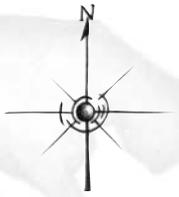
Finally, there are activities constructed to broaden the students' knowledge of this part of American history and this area of the United States on a larger scale. The students will gain insight into the political and social forces at work during the years leading up to the formation of the United States of America. This section requires students to do additional research for a potential essay or oral presentation and extends their knowledge of the text from fiction to nonfiction. A list of secondary sources is included.

Perhaps the most important component of this curriculum is that of fun. Often questions are used to draw attention to some of the more amusing or spooky parts of the book. Above all, reading should be enjoyable and entertaining, which will encourage a lifetime habit of reading for pleasure.



**Reading Comprehension/
Literary Analysis**





Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

PROLOGUE

1. How did land pirates lure ships to the shore?
2. What did the colonists receive by buying the tickets?
3. What did Melanie Smyth pick out to keep? Did she get to keep it?

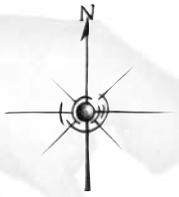
Vocabulary

cohort

refuge

plunder

trowel



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CHAPTER I

1. Where does this story take place?
2. What does Mrs. McNemmish offer to pay Zeek? What does he accept?
3. What is the connection between Zeek Beacon and Blackbeard?
4. Where does Mrs. McNemmish say the ring came from?
5. Why do you think Zeek Beacon has such a bad temper?

Vocabulary

whelk

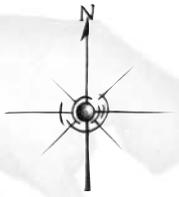
artifact

defiant

cache

booty

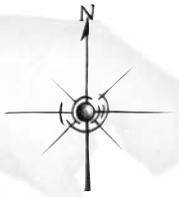
demure



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CHAPTER II

1. Why does Zeek come back to see Mrs. McNemmish?
2. What makes Zeek stop breaking things in Mrs. McNemmish's cabin?
3. Why doesn't Mark speak? How do he and Mrs. McNemmish converse?
4. What is Stefanie's connection to Blackbeard?
5. What lie does Mrs. McNemmish tell Zeek?



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CHAPTER II

6. Earlier in the story, Mrs. McNemmish tries to pay Zeek Beacon with white seeds. From what she tells the children, where did the seeds come from?

7. Why doesn't Stefanie believe Mrs. McNemmish's story of pirate treasure? Do you believe Mrs. McNemmish?

8. What is Mrs. McNemmish's relation to Blackbeard? What is her birthright? What is required to claim that birthright?

Vocabulary

brigand

indignant

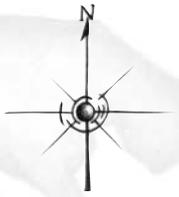
buccaneer

heirloom

dubious

gullible

oblivious



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CHAPTER III

1. How old is Mrs. McNemish? What happened to her husband and sons?
2. Why does Blackbeard shoot Israel Hands?
3. Why does Mrs. McNemish die?
4. Do you think Zeek feels bad when Mrs. McNemish dies?

Vocabulary

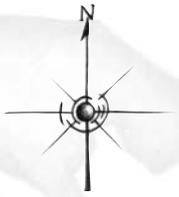
cutlass

mesmerize

infamous

perilous

luminescent



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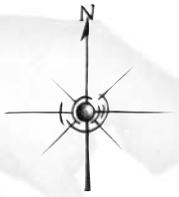
CHAPTER IV

1. When is this story taking place?
2. Before Mrs. McNemish dies, where does she tell the kids she wants to be buried? Where do the adults of the island want to bury her?
3. What inheritance has Mrs. McNemish left to the kids? What do the kids have to do to claim their inheritance?
4. On what grounds does Stefanie object to Mrs. McNemish's request?
5. What is the kids' plan? Does it sound easy? Do you think it will be as easy as they think it will be?

Vocabulary

nonchalant

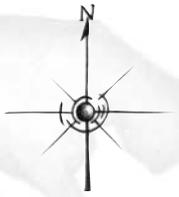
assessment



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CHAPTER V

1. How can the kids get into the church?
2. Why does Billy say they can't just break a window to get in, and how does he justify everything else they are doing?
3. How does Daniel get to the church floor? What went wrong?
4. What are the kids not thinking of when they shove the gurney into the sand?



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CHAPTER 7

5. What is the problem with the coffin lid? How do the kids resolve it?

6. What do you think about the kids' solution?

Vocabulary

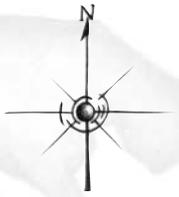
moor

sacrilegious

gurney

lair

careen



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CHAPTER VI

1. What does Billy think will happen when everyone finds out what they have done? Do you think he's right?
2. What happens to the boat with Mrs. McNemish in it?
3. What other complications do the boys encounter in the water?
4. Describe Mrs. McNemish's burial. Was she correct about her birthright?

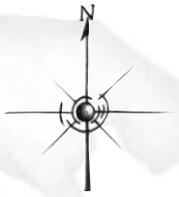
Vocabulary

zest

turbulent

quamish

tandem



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CHAPTER VII

1. Who does Daniel's dad think is responsible for Mrs. McNemish's disappearance? Define your answer.

2. Why doesn't Daniel want people to think Zeek had anything to do with Mrs. McNemish's death or disappearance?

3. How did Mrs. McNemish "travel all around the world without ever leaving paradise" when she was younger? Give an example of how you may have a similar experience.

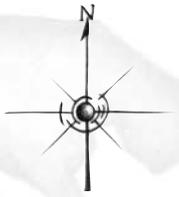
Vocabulary

deranged

logical

barter

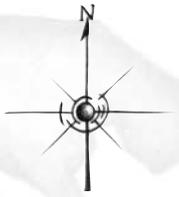
interrogate



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CHAPTER VIII

1. How does the island community learn of the meeting concerning Mrs. McNemish? Would this type of communication work in your community? Why or why not?
2. What is the date of the last entry in the captain's log they find in the trunk? Why is it significant?
3. Where did the ship's plaque come from?
4. Why does Stefanie think that the map could not be the treasure map?



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CHAPTER VIII

5. What do the kids find in the trunk? Is Stefanie happy with the contents of the trunk? Why or why not?

6. What surprise did they find at the bottom of the trunk?

Vocabulary

lament

bequeath

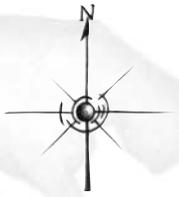
parchment

exasperate

doubloon

taxidermist

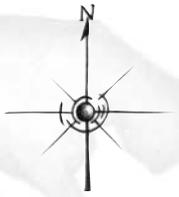
emphatic



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CHAPTER IX

1. Stefanie says she can't go down the tunnel. Why?
2. What do the kids think they will find in the tunnel?
3. What does Zeek decide to keep? What does he decide to leave behind?
4. Why can't the kids get out of the tunnel once Zeek leaves?



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CHAPTER IX

5. What does it mean when Daniel says the walls are “firing”?

6. What makes the cement look familiar?

7. Who do you think says “Carry on” in the tunnel?

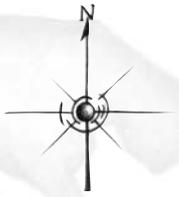
Vocabulary

gingerly

enthusiasm

pungent

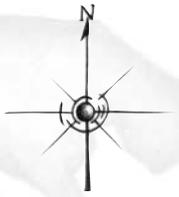
chivalry



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CHAPTER X

1. What historic landmark was under Mrs. McNemmish's shack?
2. Where do the kids think the tunnel will end? Why do they think that?
3. What happens to Stefanie in the tunnel that doesn't happen to anyone else? Why?
4. What does Billy trip over? How do the other kids react?



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CHAPTER X

5. What does Mark take from the skeleton? What happens to the skeleton?

6. What makes Billy dance in the tunnel? What does Daniel do to “help”?

Vocabulary

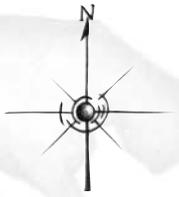
sympathetic

timid

hysterical

oblige

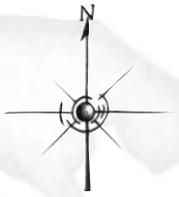
modest



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CHAPTER XI

1. How and when was the Howard Map created?
2. Who is Birdie?
3. Why is Birdie reluctant to believe in the map?
4. According to Blackbeard, what makes it easy to see ghost ships?



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CHAPTER XI

5. What happens to Mrs. McNemish when she dances with Blackbeard?

6. What do Blackbeard and Mrs. McNemish set off to do?

Vocabulary

relic

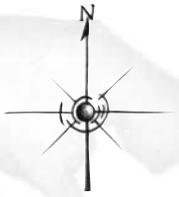
frolic

bellow

reminisce

petite

earnest



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CHAPTER XII

1. According to Billy, were all pirates bad? Do you agree that pirating could ever be okay?
2. What can the kids hear happening outside?
3. Where do they find Billy and what has he found?
4. What does Stefanie realize about the words only she can hear?
5. Why is Stefanie so anxious for them to get out of the tunnel? What makes her change her mind?

Vocabulary

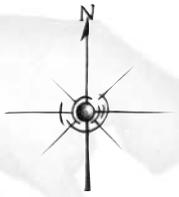
mock

cower

indicate

tidal pool

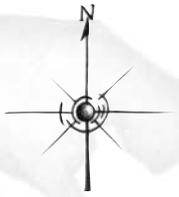
grimace



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CHAPTER XIII

1. What is so special about the blanket that Mark finds?
2. What was the tunnel a part of during the Civil War?
3. What do they find in the Snow Duck behind the chest? What does the reader know about these tickets that the children don't?
4. How do they think they will finally get out, and what goes wrong?



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CHAPTER XIII

5. Why does Stefanie say it's important that she get out?

6. What happens to Mark?

Vocabulary

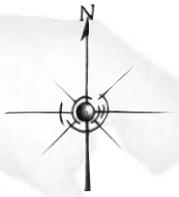
envision

oblivion

diligent

illuminate

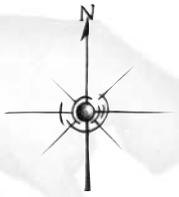
vehement



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CHAPTER XIV

1. What does Birdie say he will buy with his share of the treasure?
2. Zeek's map, radar, and computer say they are away from any land, but the boat behaves as though it has run aground. What do you think has happened?
3. Zeek keeps hearing Birdie saying things and asking him questions, but Birdie denies that he has said anything. What do you think is happening?
4. Birdie and Zeek are surprised to see another boat on the water nearby, but what lets the reader know this boat is from another century?
(Hint: It's not just the sails.)



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CHAPTER XIV

5. What does the other ship begin doing? How does Zeek respond?

Vocabulary

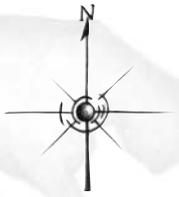
shoal

havoc

audible

triad

dexterity



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CHAPTER XV

1. What do Birdie and Zeek think is happening to them?
2. What does the Coast Guard see?
3. Why is there a difference between what Zeek and Birdie see and what the Coast Guard sees?

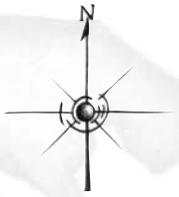
Vocabulary

plummet

rant

bewilder

incoherent



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CHAPTER XVI

1. What clues did Teddy and Todd find at the widow's shack?
2. What makes the sheriff go back to the shack?
3. How do they know for sure that the kids have been in the tunnel?
4. Have Todd and Teddy ever heard about a tunnel? What makes them think this is the same one?

Vocabulary

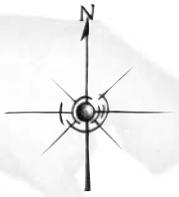
bludgeon

incredulous

reluctant

gawk

sarcastic



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CHAPTER XVII

1. What makes Teddy and Todd finally realize how they can rescue the kids?
2. How does Todd prove to Teddy that the space underneath the tree is part of the same tunnel?
3. What happens as word spreads about the location of the kids?
4. Why are the kids not responding to the rescuers?
5. What is Mark dreaming?

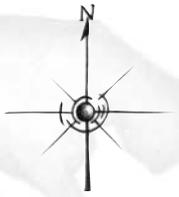
Vocabulary

apparent

protrude

scorch

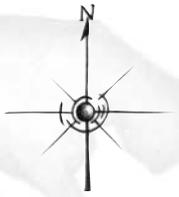
duplicate



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CHAPTER XVIII

1. How far were the children from the entrance?
2. What does Daniel hear when he is being lifted out of the tunnel?
3. All four kids have been taken to the hospital. What is wrong with each of them?
4. What are the adults going to do about the tunnel?
5. Who is the last person to tell Daniel goodnight?



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CHAPTER XVIII

6. Most people know that Israel Hands was Blackbeard's first mate. But in this story, what does Blackbeard really think about him and his descendent Zeek? How do we know this?

7. Where did Arthur's pipe come from?

8. Tom O'Neal "catches" Mrs. McNemmish's coffin in his net. What has happened to her body? Why is that surprising? What do you think has happened?

Vocabulary

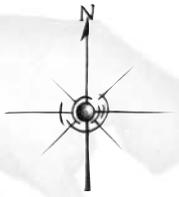
discreet

blight

demeanor

statuesque

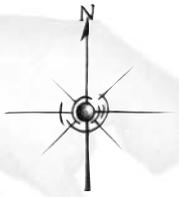
candid



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CHAPTER XIX

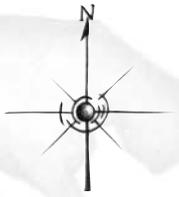
1. Where does Mrs. McNemish end up being buried?
2. What does Mark put in the coffin?
3. What does Stefanie put in the coffin?
4. Given that they didn't find any diamonds, is Stefanie sorry they did what they did?



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CHAPTER XX

1. What had Blackbeard built on his land?
2. Was Stefanie right about the skeletons looking odd? Explain.
3. Why did everyone stare at Mr. Powers?
4. Who probably dug the tunnel? How did they do it?
5. Why would Blackbeard have dug only one entrance?
6. Who presumably dug the other entrance? Why?



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CHAPTER XX

7. Why didn't the story of the tunnel get handed down and become general knowledge of the island?

8. What do the kids find out about the bat in the tunnel?

9. What did Mrs. McNemmish sell from the treasure she found? Why did it upset Stefanie?

10. Mrs. McNemmish felt that Blackbeard had done good and bad deeds in his life. Explain.

Vocabulary

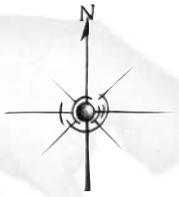
topography

sentiment

heritage

enunciate

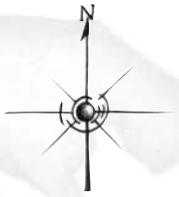
plausible



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CHAPTER XXI

1. What did Mrs. McNemish buy with the treasure she sold?
2. Who does the land go to?
3. What is Stefanie's opinion of what she has gotten from the treasure?
4. How does Stefanie's father define the Riviera?
5. What is the other half of the kids' inheritance?
6. Who did Mr. Springer tell about the seeds?



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CHAPTER XXI

7. What was Mrs. McNemmish's greatest secret?

8. Why did Mrs. McNemmish call her whelk ducks "Snow Ducks"?

9. In the end, Mark and Stefanie hear a bell ringing and see lights in the distance, but Daniel and Billy do not. Are there lights and a bell?

10. In the final line of the novel, Blackbeard gloats, "You never did find me third trunk." Do you think the kids will find it?

Vocabulary

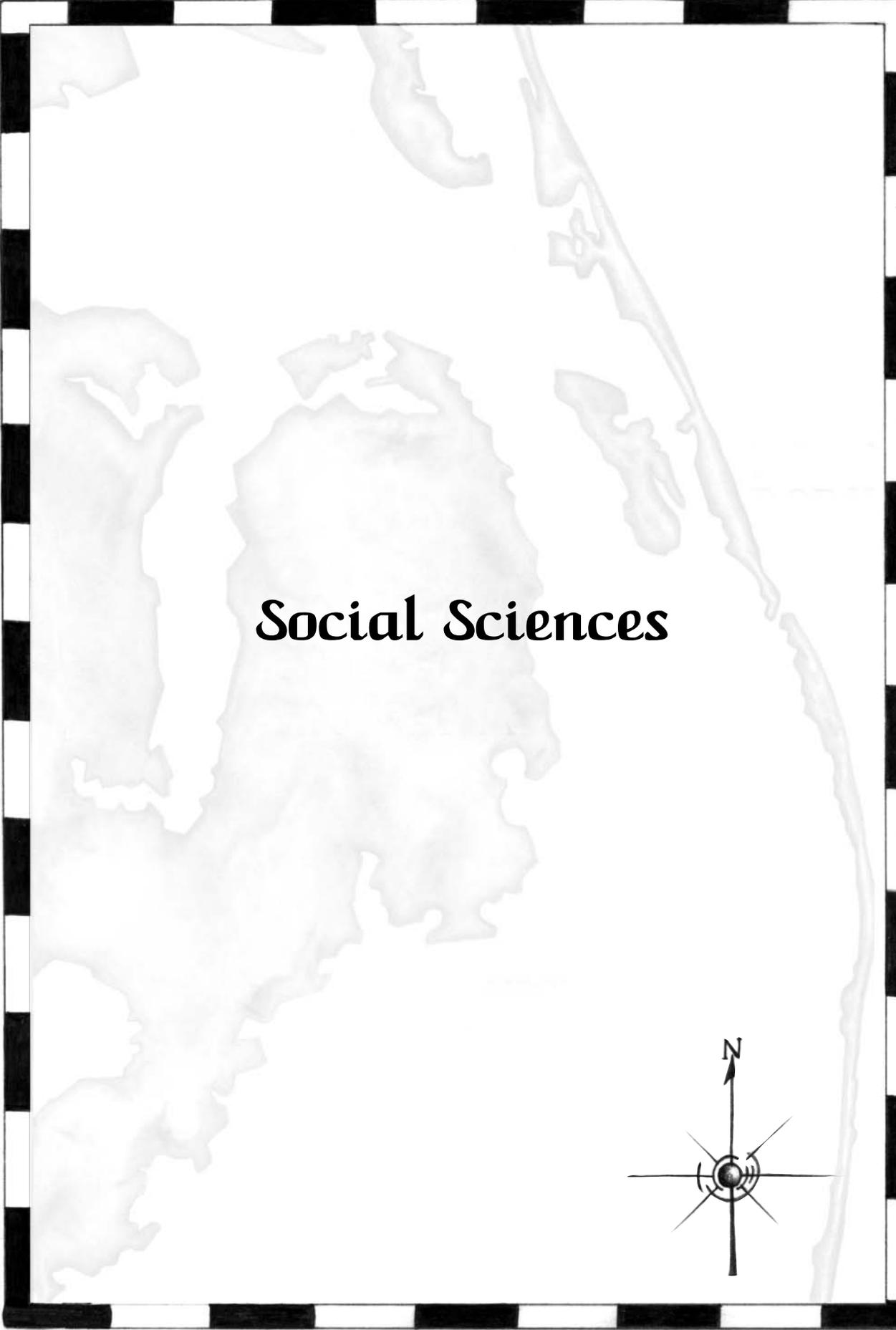
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perplex

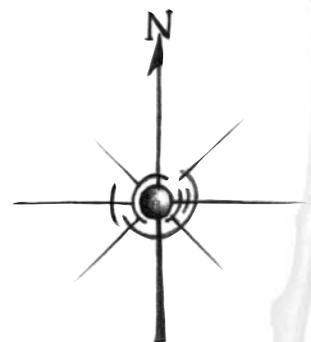
mimic

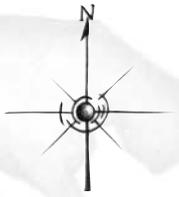
implication

smidgen



Social Sciences

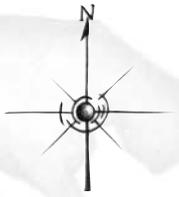




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H I S T O R Y

1. How did land pirates lure ships close to shore?
2. What were the ticket holders entitled to do?
3. What was Blackbeard's real name?
4. Where was Teach's Hole? What happened there?
5. According to Mrs. McNemish, what led to Blackbeard's defeat and death?



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H I S T O R Y

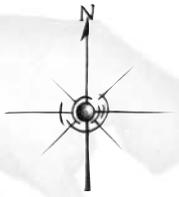
6. What did Blackbeard look like? How was he dressed in the dream sequence with Mrs. McNemish? Would he have been dressed like that in real life?

7. What did Blackbeard's flag look like?

8. How did Blackbeard prepare himself for a battle?

9. What was the name of Blackbeard's ship?

10. How did Blackbeard keep his men on their toes?



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H I S T O R Y

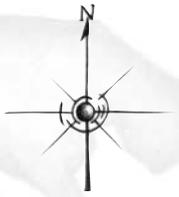
11. Blackbeard was a popular figure among many of the colonists. Why was that?

12. How did Ocracoke Island come to be populated by pirates and their descendents?

13. What was the Underground Railroad? Why would the slaves need quilts for directions?

14. What does “giving (or not giving) quarters” mean?

15. Who killed Blackbeard? What happened to Blackbeard's head? What happened to the rest of Blackbeard?

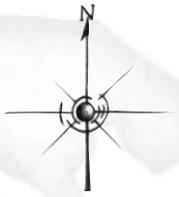


Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

H I S T O R Y

16. What would happen to a person who drank out of that very special mug?

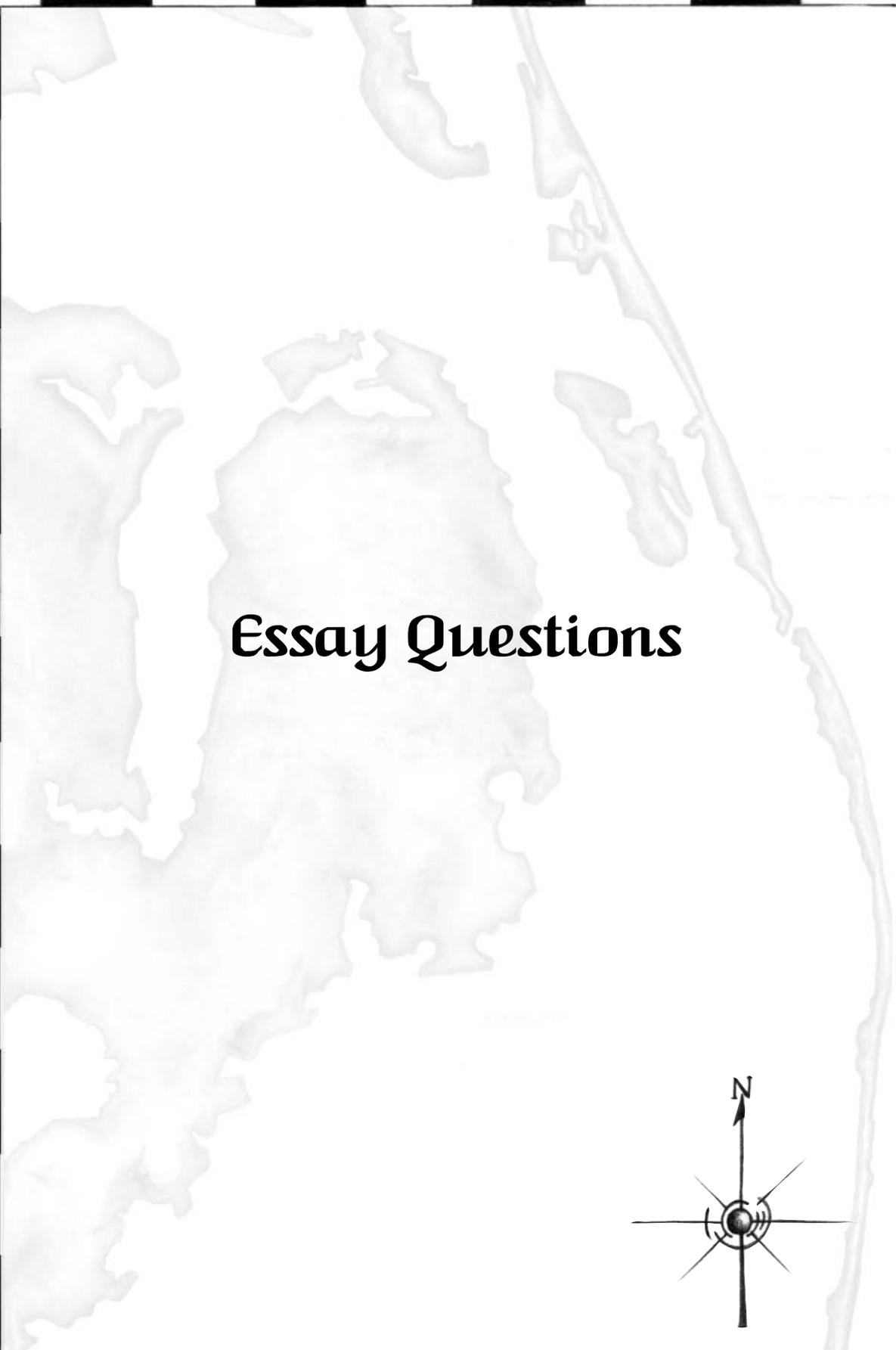
17. Why did Governor Spotswood want to get rid of Blackbeard?



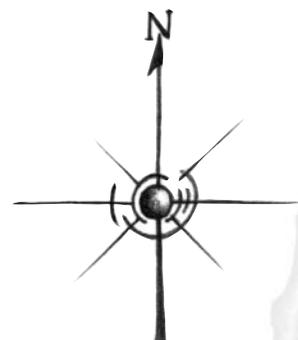
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

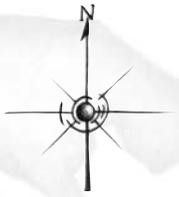
G E O G R A P H Y

1. Where is Ocracoke Island? Is it a true island?
2. Where is Teach's Hole? What happened there?
3. Where is the Graveyard of the Atlantic? How has it earned its name?
4. Name some of the birds and ocean creatures mentioned that a person might see on Ocracoke.



Essay Questions





Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

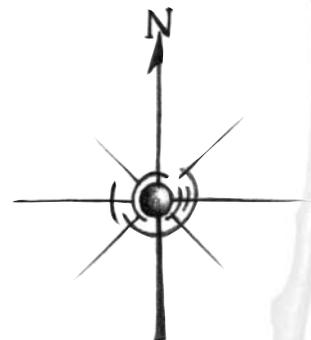
ESSAYS

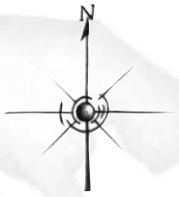
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove, like any quality fiction, raises very real, very common issues. These essay questions provide an opportunity for students to examine those questions—questions of morality, ethics, loyalty, duty, and relationships. It also provides a place for students to take these issues and apply them to their own lives, and to raise self-awareness of themselves, their families, and their communities.

1. The kids broke a lot of rules/laws in order to bury Mrs. McNemmish at sea. Do you think what they did was right or wrong? What would you have done in their place? Do you have anyone in your life who reminds you of Mrs. McNemmish?
2. There is a lot of play between dreams and reality in the book. Were dreams strictly dreams? Describe the relationship between the ghosts and the living characters. Do dreams play a part in your own reality?
3. Describe the kids' relationships with each other. Do they love each other or hate each other? Do you have relationships like theirs in your life?
4. Discuss the believability of the characters Billy, Stefanie, Daniel, and Mark. What effect do the personalities of the characters have on the plot and how everything works out? Do the characters help make the plot more believable? What do you think would happen if you and your friends were faced with an adventure like this?
5. How do the people of Ocracoke feel about their island? How do you feel about your own community? What is similar? What is different? How do you think the everyday lives of the main characters are different from your own?



Research Projects





Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

P R O J E C T S

1. Although his real name has never been discovered, many historians believe that Blackbeard must have come from a wealthy or even aristocratic family. What is the main reason for this belief? What else in his life and his behavior would support that theory?
2. There were many other pirates sailing the waters of the Atlantic coast and the Caribbean islands. What made Blackbeard so well known and successful in such a short career, compared to so many other pirates?
3. The governor of Virginia, Governor Spotswood, arguably did not even have the authority to send men after Blackbeard when Blackbeard was in North Carolina. Why was he so eager to get rid of Blackbeard, when the North Carolina governor was not? How did the colonists feel toward Blackbeard and other pirates?
4. The dialect of Ocracoke Island is one of the first things visitors to the island notice. What is distinctive about the dialect? What is the origin of the unique words used by the islanders? What is distinctive or unique about the dialect in your community or region?
5. Ocracoke Island, until fairly recently, has remained somewhat isolated from the rest of the United States. Find out as much as you can about this fascinating island—past, present, and future.

Recommended Resources

Books

Blackbeard the Pirate: A Reappraisal of His Life and Times, by Robert E. Lee (John F. Blair: Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 1974).

Hoi Toide on the Outer Banks, by Walt Wolfram and Natalis Schilling-Estes (The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

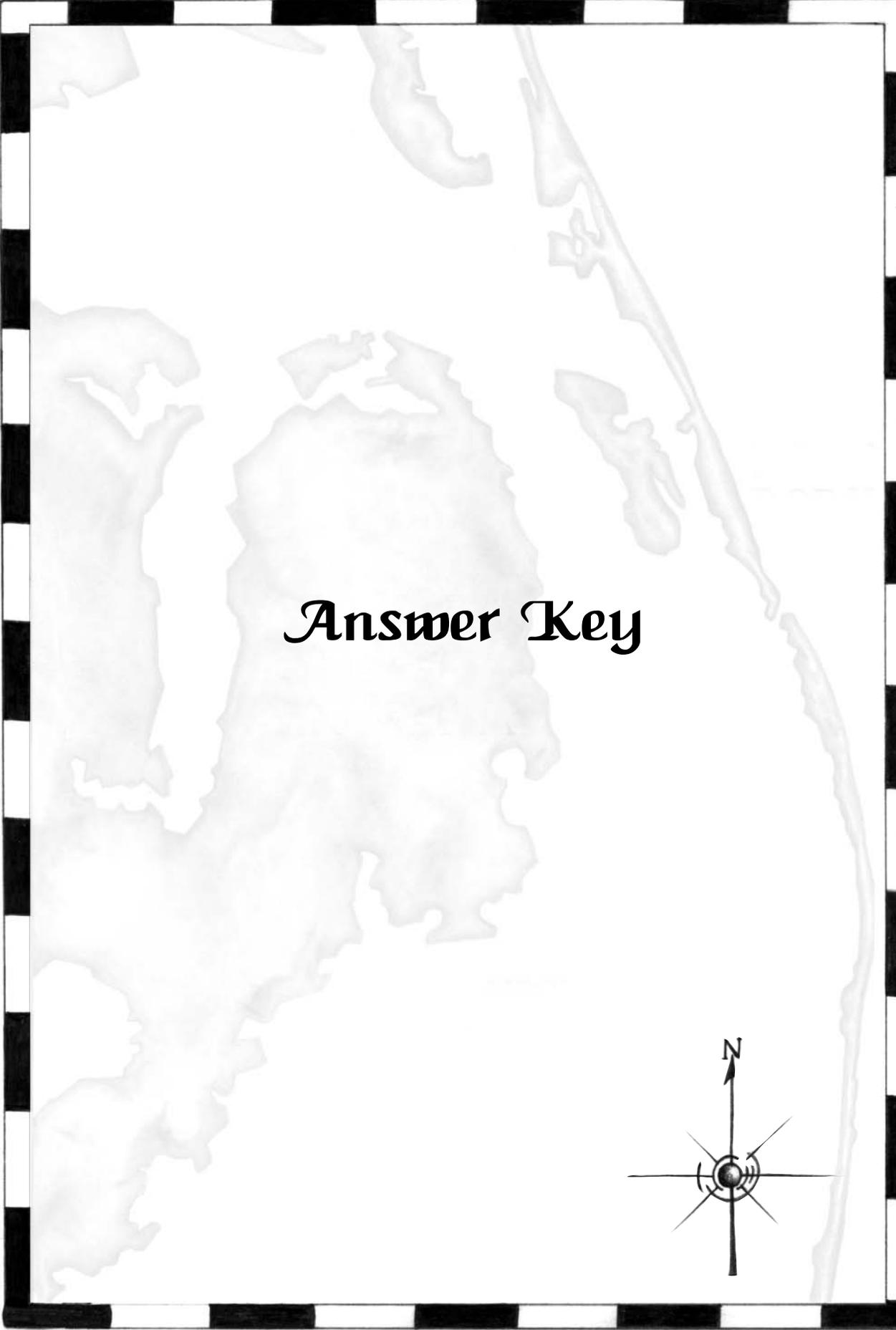
Websites

<http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/blackbea.cfm>

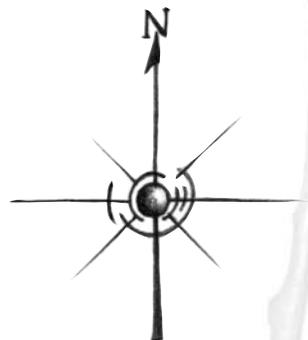
<http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/maritime/Blackbeard/default.htm>

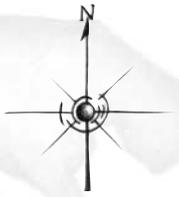
<http://www.legends.dm.net/pirates/blackbeard.html>

<http://www.ocracokepreservation.org>



Answer Key





Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

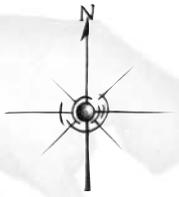
READING COMPREHENSION/LITERARY ANALYSIS

Prologue

1. How did pirates lure ships to the shore?
By tying lanterns onto horses' necks and leading them along the shore to lure in ships.
2. What did the colonists receive by buying the tickets?
The right to watch the looting and take some loot for themselves.
2. What did Melanie Smyth pick out to keep? Did she get to keep it?
A pair of candlesticks and a silver trowel, which were taken away by Governor Spotswood. She did manage to keep the tickets.

Chapter I

1. Where does this story take place?
Ocracoke Island, North Carolina.
2. What does Mrs. McNemmish offer to pay Zeek? What does he accept?
She tries to pay him with a handful of white seeds, but he will only accept a very old ruby ring.
3. What is the connection between Zeek Beacon and Blackbeard?
Zeek is a descendent of Israel Hands, Blackbeard's first mate.
4. Where does Mrs. McNemmish say the ring came from?
She says the ring came from Blackbeard's booty.
5. Why do you think Zeek Beacon has such a bad temper?
There is no right or wrong answer, but the answer should have some basis in the text.

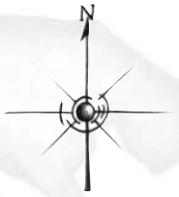


Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter II

1. Why does Zeek come back to see Mrs. McNemmish?
He thinks that she knows where the rest of Blackbeard's treasure is and he wants it for himself.
2. What makes Zeek stop breaking things in Mrs. McNemmish's cabin?
The arrival of the kids: Daniel, Billy, Mark, and Stefanie.
3. Why doesn't Mark speak? How do he and Mrs. McNemmish converse?
Mark doesn't speak because of something terrible that had happened to him, though exactly what is unknown. Mark and Mrs. McNemmish converse through facial expressions and "pirate sense."
4. What is Stefanie's connection to Blackbeard?
Her great-grandfather times three knew Blackbeard and received the pipe that was eventually passed down to Mrs. McNemmish through her late husband Arthur's kin.
5. What lie does Mrs. McNemmish tell Zeek?
She tells him there is no treasure other than the various objects set out in her shack.
6. Earlier in the story, Mrs. McNemmish tries to pay Zeek Beacon with white seeds. From what she tells the children, where did the seeds come from?
She found them with the other treasure.
7. Why doesn't Stefanie believe Mrs. McNemmish's story of pirate treasure? Do you believe Mrs. McNemmish?
She thinks that Mrs. McNemmish wouldn't be living in her shack if she had found treasure.
8. What is Mrs. McNemmish's relation to Blackbeard? What is her birthright? What is required to claim that birthright?
She is his great-great-grandniece times two and a half and she is entitled to be a pirate by the side of Blackbeard on the Queen Anne's Revenge. She must be buried at sea to claim that birthright.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

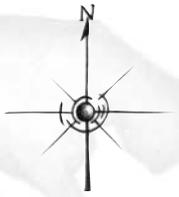
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter III

1. How old is Mrs. McNemish? What happened to her husband and sons?
She is 96 years old. Her husband and two sons were lost at sea.
2. Why does Blackbeard shoot Israel Hands?
He shoots Israel Hands because he doesn't respect Hands and he wanted to keep the other pirates on their toes.
3. Why does Mrs. McNemish die?
The answer isn't clear, but Mrs. McNemish was both very old and being roughed up by Zeek Beacon. She seemed ready to sail with Blackbeard, and had shared with the kids everything she wanted them to know.
4. Do you think Zeek feels bad when Mrs. McNemish dies?
Answers will vary.

Chapter IV

1. When is this story taking place?
Around Halloween.
2. Before Mrs. McNemish dies, where does she tell the kids she wants to be buried? Where do the adults of the island want to bury her?
She tells the kids that she wants to be buried at sea, but her family is having her buried on the island.
3. What inheritance has Mrs. McNemish left to the kids? What do the kids have to do to claim their inheritance?
New snow ducks, a poem/riddle, and possibly treasure, but they must bury Mrs. McNemish at sea to claim it.
4. On what grounds does Stefanie object to Mrs. McNemish's request?
She says that people are supposed to be buried in graveyards, and that it's not Christian to be buried at sea.



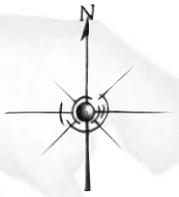
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

5. What is the kids' plan? Does it sound easy? Do you think it will be as easy as they think it will be?
The plan is to take her coffin from the church, back up the road behind her shack, load it into a boat on the ocean side, and take it out to sea, pulling the coffin boat with another boat.

Chapter V

1. How can the kids get into the church?
Through the steeple window.
2. Why does Billy say they can't just break a window to get in, and how does he justify everything else they are doing?
Billy says breaking the window would be sacrilegious, but the robbery part is okay because they are going to give the widow the burial she wanted. The kids are honoring Mrs. McNemish's final wishes.
3. How does Daniel get to the church floor? What went wrong?
He jumps down on the stack of folding chairs, but the stack collapses into a big heap on the floor.
4. What are the kids not thinking of when they shove the gurney into the sand?
The wheels won't turn in sand, so the gurney stops, but the casket continues to move.
5. What is the problem with the coffin lid? How do the kids resolve it?
The lid broke in half when it flew off the gurney, so the kids use fishing net and duct tape to cover the front of the coffin so that Mrs. McNemish won't come out of the coffin.
6. What do you think about the kids' solution?
Answers will vary.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

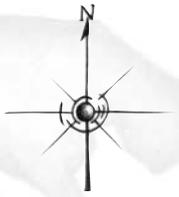
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter VI

1. What does Billy think will happen when everyone finds out what they have done? Do you think he's right?
Billy thinks they will get some kind of reward. It's pretty obvious that they are breaking a lot of rules and going against the wishes of the family, so it's safe to say that they will not be getting a reward.
2. What happens to the boat with Mrs. McNemmish in it?
It becomes untied from the boat the kids are driving.
3. What other complications do the boys encounter in the water?
They get pulled into a whirlpool, and Daniel gets thrown into the water.
4. Describe Mrs. McNemmish's burial. Was she correct about her birthright?
The boys say some words about her and about how the community will miss her. We hear from Blackbeard's ghost that she is now a pirate.

Chapter VII

1. Who does Daniel's dad think is responsible for Mrs. McNemmish's disappearance? Define your answer.
A "dingbatter"—the Ocracoke word for tourist.
2. Why doesn't Daniel want people to think Zeek had anything to do with Mrs. McNemmish's death or disappearance?
Because then everyone could find out what the kids had been up to and about the treasure.
3. How did Mrs. McNemmish "travel all around the world without ever leaving paradise" when she was younger? Give an example of how you can have a similar experience.
She met the mail boat and looked at everyone's postcards.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

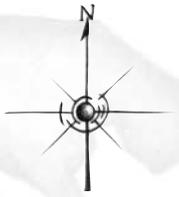
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter VIII

1. How does the island community learn of the meeting concerning Mrs. McNemish? Would this type of communication work in your community? Why or why not?
Through the Baptist church telephone tree.
2. What is the date of the last entry in the captain's log they find in the trunk? Why is it significant?
November 21, 1718, which was the day before Blackbeard was killed.
3. Where did the ship's plaque come from?
From the Queen Anne's Revenge, Blackbeard's ship.
4. Why does Stefanie think that the map could not be the treasure map?
Because it shows the area around the Diamond Shoals, where boats cannot navigate.
5. What do the kids find in the trunk? Is Stefanie happy with the contents of the trunk? Why or why not?
No, because she wanted jewels, especially diamonds, but they seemed to find only historical artifacts.
6. What surprise did they find at the bottom of the trunk?
A ladder, leading to a tunnel.

Chapter IX

1. Stefanie says she can't go down the tunnel? Why?
Because she's sick.
2. What do the kids think they will find in the tunnel?
Treasure.
3. What does Zeek decide to keep? What does he decide to leave behind?
He takes the map and other artifacts and leaves the seeds.
4. Why can't the kids get out of the tunnel once Zeek leaves?
Because he has locked the lid.



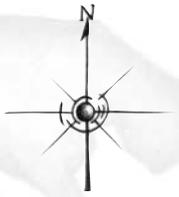
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

5. What does it mean when Daniel says the walls are “firing”?
They are sparkling in phosphorescent colors.
6. What makes the cement look familiar?
It's the same cement that was used to plug up the hole in the Bobby Garrish tree.
7. Who do you think says “Carry on” in the tunnel?
We're not sure; there's nobody else down there, at least nobody living.

Chapter X

1. What historic landmark was under Mrs. McNemish's shack?
Blackbeard's outhouse.
2. Where do the kids think the tunnel will end? Why do they think that?
They think the tunnel will end at the Bobby Garrish tree, because the cement in the tunnel looks the same as the plug in the tree.
3. What happens to Stefanie in the tunnel that doesn't happen to anyone else? Why?
She feels wind and hears a voice. The answer to “Why?” will be speculative, but can be used as a critical thinking exercise.
4. What does Billy trip over? How do the other kids react?
A skeleton's foot. The kids are shocked.
5. What does Mark take from the skeleton? What happens to the skeleton?
Mark takes a yellow handkerchief from around the skeleton's neck and the skeleton crumbles.
6. What makes Billy dance in the tunnel? What does Daniel do to “help”?
A bat gets caught in Billy's hair and Daniel hits the bat with a bottle; unfortunately, the bat is attached to Billy's head.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

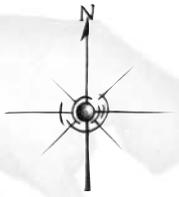
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XI

1. How and when was the Howard Map created?
When William Howard was pardoned by Governor Spotswood, he went back to Ocracoke, purchased the land, and supposedly created a map that showed all the sunken merchant ships in and around Diamond Shoals.
2. Who is Birdie?
Birdie is Zeek's first mate.
3. Why is Birdie reluctant to believe in the map?
Because the merchant ships had all sunk because the Diamond Shoals can't be navigated.
4. According to Blackbeard, what makes it easy to see ghost ships?
Moonlight and stormy afternoons.
5. What happens to Mrs. McNemish when she dances with Blackbeard?
She grows younger and younger.
6. What do Blackbeard and Mrs. McNemish set off to do?
To give Zeek Beacon a hard time.

Chapter XII

1. According to Billy, were all pirates bad? Do you agree that pirating could ever be okay?
Billy said they weren't all awful, just pirates because of the money to be gained. The opinions will differ.
2. What can the kids hear happening outside?
A huge storm.
3. Where do they find Billy and what has he found?
They find Billy next to a trunk with the initials "EDT" on it.



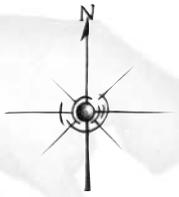
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

4. What does Stefanie realize about the words only she can hear?
They are clues to the things they were going to do or things they would find.
5. Why is Stefanie so anxious for them to get out of the tunnel? What makes her change her mind?
She needs to go to the bathroom, but she changes her mind when Mark finds a bag full of gold pieces.

Chapter XIII

1. What is so special about the blanket that Mark finds?
It was a quilt that gave directions to runaway slaves to help them find the next safe spot.
2. What was the tunnel a part of during the Civil War?
The Underground Railroad.
3. What do they find in the Snow Duck behind the chest? What does the reader know about these tickets that the children don't?
A tiny skeleton key and two tickets. The tickets are obviously the same ones described in the preface: tickets for booty from a land pirates' raid at Nags Head.
4. How do they think they will finally get out, and what goes wrong?
They find the bottom of the Bobby Garrish tree, which has a rope and a wood beam ladder attached to it. Lightning strikes the tree, though, and sets it on fire.
5. Why does Stefanie say it's important that she get out?
Because she didn't say goodbye to her mother.
6. What happens to Mark?
He falls and breaks his glasses, and the glass cuts his forehead.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

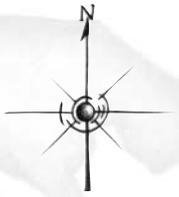
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XIV

1. What does Birdie say he will buy with his share of the treasure?
A parrot.
2. Zeek's map, radar, and computer say they are away from any land, but the boat behaves as though it has run aground. What do you think has happened?
It's not said explicitly, but it seems that Blackbeard is playing tricks on Zeek.
3. Zeek keeps hearing Birdie saying things and asking him questions, but Birdie denies that he has said anything. What do you think is happening?
Again, Blackbeard or another spirit is playing a trick. With all the ships that have sunk in that area, it's bound to be full of ghosts!
4. Birdie and Zeek are surprised to see another boat on the water nearby, but what lets the reader know this boat is from another century?
It's a three-mast schooner, but also it has whale oil lamps and a row of cannons.
5. What does the other ship begin doing? How does Zeek respond?
The other ship begins firing the cannons at the Lucky Beacon. Zeek tells Birdie to go get his rifles.

Chapter XV

1. What do Birdie and Zeek think is happening to them?
Birdie and Zeek think they are being attacked by the schooner.
2. What does the Coast Guard see?
They see Zeek and Birdie floating in the middle of an empty ocean, shooting at storm clouds.
3. Why is there a difference between what Zeek and Birdie see and what the Coast Guard sees?
It's a mystery, but it has something to do with Blackbeard and being in or near the storm cloud.



Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

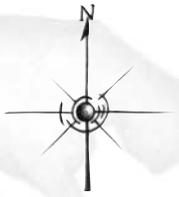
A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XVI

1. What clues do Teddy and Todd find at the widow's shack?
The kids' bikes and the missing bedspread.
2. What makes the sheriff go back to the shack?
He realizes that the lock on the trunk had been put on backward.
3. How do they know for sure that the kids have been in the tunnel?
They find Stefanie's cough drop wrapper.
4. Have Todd and Teddy ever heard about a tunnel? What makes them think this is the same one?
They had heard about Blackbeard having a tunnel when they were kids, and seeing a skeleton dressed as a pirate makes them believe they are in it.

Chapter XVII

1. What makes Teddy and Todd finally realize how they can rescue the kids?
They hear from Drum that the Bobby Garrish tree has caught on fire and there is a ditch or shaft underneath.
2. How does Todd prove to Teddy that the space underneath the tree is part of the same tunnel?
He shows him a piece of the tunnel cement that came from underneath the tree.
3. What happens as word spreads about the location of the kids?
The villagers gather, bringing food and coffee, lighting candles and saying prayers. The Coast Guard sends help.
4. Why are the kids not responding to the rescuers?
They are all asleep or too sick/injured.
5. What is Mark dreaming?
He is dreaming about Blackbeard and Mrs. McNemish attacking Zeek's boat.

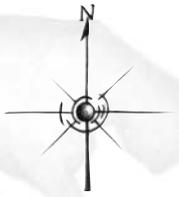


Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XVIII

1. How far were the children from the entrance?
Twenty-five feet.
2. What does Daniel hear when he is being lifted out of the tunnel?
He hears cheering, church bells, and whistles from boats and ferries.
3. All four kids have been taken to the hospital. What is wrong with each of them?
Stefanie has pneumonia and a collapsed lung; Mark has a bad cut over his eye; Daniel has a bad spider bite; Billy has cuts and bruises.
4. What are the adults going to do about the tunnel?
They intend to shore it up before anyone goes back down.
5. Who is the last person to tell Daniel goodnight?
Daniel thinks Mrs. McNemmish's spirit has come into his room to say goodnight.
6. Most people know that Israel Hands was Blackbeard's first mate. But in this story, what does Blackbeard really think about him and his descendent Zeek? How do we know this?
Blackbeard shows contempt for Israel Hands, first by shooting his knee cap off and secondly by what he says about Zeek and Israel Hands in this chapter – that they are both fools.
7. Where did Arthur's pipe come from?
Blackbeard acquired the pipe from Israel Hands during a controversial card game, and then the pipe was passed down through Arthur's family.
8. Tom O'Neal "catches" Mrs. McNemmish's coffin in his net. What has happened to her body? Why is that surprising? What do you think has happened?
The body is no longer inside the coffin. It is surprising because the fishing net that the kids used to keep her inside was undisturbed. The answers to the last part of this question will vary.

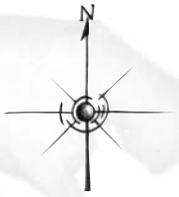


Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XIX

1. Where does Mrs. McNemish end up being buried?
In the ocean – her casket in the cemetery was empty.
2. What does Mark put in the coffin?
A carved branch of a live oak from near Blackbeard's old trading post; a shaving from the Toothache Tree; the leather pouch; and a picture album of the people and places of Ocracoke.
3. What does Stefanie put in the coffin?
A snow duck with some of the pirate coins; some of the tunnel cement; Mrs. McNemish's favorite Bible; letters from her dead husband; two carved laughing gulls from Clinton; and an emerald green bed pillow.
4. Given that they didn't find any diamonds, is Stefanie sorry they did what they did?
She is glad they did what they did, even though they didn't find any diamonds.
5. What does Billy put in the coffin?
The newspaper story from the trunk telling about the capture of Blackbeard; the Howard Map also found in her trunk; stories from the local schoolchildren; a flashlight; knickknacks and statues; and her favorite apron.
6. What does Daniel put in the coffin?
A copy of Blackbeard's flag; the pack of cards from the tunnel; the ruby ring, a pipe, mug and lantern that looked like the ones Zeek broke; and a pile of quilting squares.
7. What punishment do the kids receive for all the laws they have broken?
The kids each have to do 200 hours of community service, and they will donate 10% of their earnings to fix the church and pay for Tom's new fishing net.

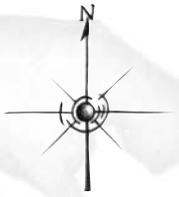


Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

Chapter XX

1. What had Blackbeard built on his land?
A castle and an outhouse, though Mrs. McNemmish believed the outhouse was just a cover for the tunnel.
2. Was Stefanie right about the skeletons looking odd? Explain.
Yes. Mrs. McNemmish's journal states that they had to put the skeletons back together again and probably did not do so correctly.
3. Why did everyone stare at Mr. Powers?
Because he had on a suit and tie.
4. Who probably dug the tunnel? How did they do it?
Because of the height, Blackbeard's men probably dug it. They did perk tests to figure out which areas wouldn't leak water quickly, dug there, and then shored up the walls with cement.
5. Why would Blackbeard have dug only one entrance?
To keep his treasure safe.
6. Who presumably dug the other entrance? Why?
The tunnel was part of the Underground Railroad, and slaves needed to be able to go in one way and come out another. Slaves and O'cockers dug the other entrance.
7. Why didn't the story of the tunnel get handed down and become general knowledge of the island?
Because even after the Civil War ended, North Carolina was still full of Southern sympathizers who were bitter about the war, and it would have caused a lot of ill feelings.
8. What do the kids find out about the bat in the tunnel?
The bat was Mrs. McNemmish's pet and kept her company while she was working on the tunnel.
9. What did Mrs. McNemmish sell from the treasure she found? Why did it upset Stefanie?
She sold coins, jewel-encrusted glassware, and jewelry. It upset Stefanie because she was looking for jewels above all, especially diamonds.



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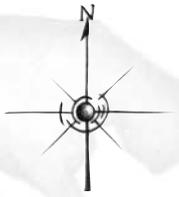
A N S W E R K E Y

10. Mrs. McNemmish felt that Blackbeard had done good and bad deeds in his life. Explain.

Blackbeard gave some of the loot from pirated ships to the colonists, saving them from having to pay English taxes or prices; on the other hand, he undoubtedly hurt people from his pirating activities.

Chapter XXI

1. What did Mrs. McNemmish buy with the treasure she sold?
Land tracts.
2. Who does the land go to?
Three parcels were preserved. The kids inherited a quarter of the fourth parcel. The rest of the fourth parcel was to be given to the village children who descended from the original families.
3. What is Stefanie's opinion of what she has gotten from the treasure?
She is happy, even though it wasn't diamonds.
4. How does Stefanie's father define the Riviera?
It's a place where people vacation who can't live on Ocracoke.
5. What is the other half of the kids' inheritance?
Mrs. McNemmish had inherited two tickets entitling the owner to loot from the land pirates. She put in her will that she wished the children would track down the rightful owners of that loot and arrange its return to the owners' descendents.
6. Who did Mr. Springer tell about the seeds?
Only the islanders who are descendents of the original families.
7. What was Mrs. McNemmish's greatest secret?
That the seeds, all the seeds, had diamonds inside.
8. Why did Mrs. McNemmish call her whelk ducks "Snow Ducks"?
She named them after the ducks and birds who perched on the snow fencing.

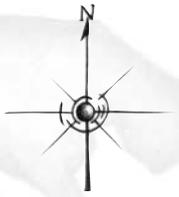


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9. In the end, Mark and Stefanie hear a bell ringing and see lights in the distance, but Daniel and Billy do not. Are there lights and a bell?
Well, it depends whether you believe in ghosts – it seems like they were coming from Blackbeard's ghost ship.

10. In the final line of the novel, Blackbeard gloats, "You never did find me third trunk." Do you think the kids will find it?
Answers will vary.



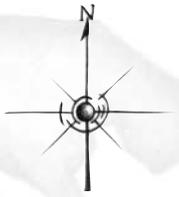
Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove

A N S W E R K E Y

SOCIAL SCIENCES

History

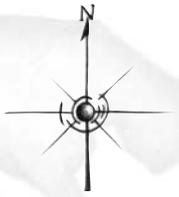
1. How did land pirates lure ships close to shore?
(Prologue) They put lanterns around their horses' necks and sticks on their legs, then had the horses walk up and down the dunes. As the lanterns bobbed they appeared like a ship bobbing in the water, thus making it seem safe to come close to shore.
2. What were the ticket holders entitled to do?
(Prologue) They were entitled to watch the land pirates loot a ship and to pick something for themselves from the leftovers.
3. What was Blackbeard's real name?
(Chap. II, p. 18) He went by Edward Drummand Teach, but no one knew his real name, as most pirates adopted aliases to protect their families back in England. Not even the pirates Blackbeard sailed with were certain of his real name.
4. Where was Teach's Hole? What happened there?
(Chap. I, p. 21) Teach's Hole is on a southern point on Ocracoke Island, where Blackbeard had his house and his lookout.
5. According to Mrs. McNemmish, what led to Blackbeard's defeat and death?
(Chap. I, p. 22) He was sleeping off his "grog" on the boat when Capt. Maynard sneaked up on him.
6. What did Blackbeard look like? How was he dressed in the dream sequence with Mrs. McNemmish? Would he have been dressed like that in real life?
(Chap. III, p. 31) He is described as being very tall, 6'5". He had a massive black beard that covered his face and his chest. The book describes him as wearing a long black frock that flared at the calves, black boots, a wide-brimmed hat with a burgundy plume, and three guns and holsters across his chest. This is indeed how he is described by various accounts. His size and appearance often frightened crews and passengers of other ships into giving up without a fight.



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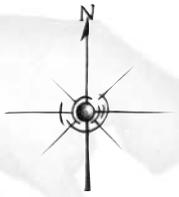
7. What did Blackbeard's flag look like?
(Chap. III, p. 31) On a black background is a white skeleton of the devil toasting death with an hourglass and spearing a heart dripping with red blood.
8. How did Blackbeard prepare himself for a battle?
(Chap. III, p. 33) He strapped on more guns and knives. He also took pieces of hemp cord that had been dipped into saltpeter and limewater, wove them through his beard, and lit them so that his head was surrounded by smoke.
9. What was the name of Blackbeard's ship?
(Chap. III, p. 31) The Queen Anne's Revenge.
10. How did Blackbeard keep his men on their toes?
(Chap. III, p. 32) With the unexpected. The dream incident of shooting Israel Hands in the kneecap apparently once happened, with the express intent of keeping his men in line through fear.
11. Blackbeard was a popular figure among many of the colonists. Why was that?
(Chap. XX, p. 320) He gave colonial families food and furniture that he had stolen from ships but didn't want, so that they wouldn't have to pay the English taxes and/or prices.
12. How did Ocracoke Island come to be populated by pirates and their descendents?
(Chap. XI, p. 148) William Howard, Blackbeard's quartermaster, was pardoned by Governor Spotswood. He then returned and purchased the island of Ocracoke, and was eventually joined by other pirates, who settled there.



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13. What was the Underground Railroad? Why would the slaves need quilts for directions?
(Chap. XIII, pp. 188-189) It was a series of houses, farms, and hide-outs where people helped slaves to make their way north. The figures on the quilt told slaves where the next stop was and were read like a road map. The people helping the slaves would wash the quilts and hang them out on the clotheslines, so that anyone looking at them would think they were just household laundry. The slaves, however, could run up and look at them and see where to go next.
14. What does “giving (or not giving) quarters” mean?
“Not giving quarters” means that no prisoners will be taken – it is a fight to the death (Chap. VIII, p. 104).
15. Who killed Blackbeard? What happened to Blackbeard's head? What happened to the rest of Blackbeard?
Robert Maynard, lieutenant of His Majesty's ship Pearl, was sent by the governor of Virginia to kill Blackbeard. Blackbeard's head was cut off and taken to Virginia as proof of his death. It was eventually made into a beer mug. His headless body reportedly swam around the ship several times before sinking (Chap. VIII, pp. 103-104).
16. What would happen to a person who drank out of that very special mug?
The person who drank from the mug was able to share the devilish dreams of Blackbeard himself (Chap. VIII, p. 105).
17. Why did Governor Spotswood want to get rid of Blackbeard?
Blackbeard not only stole goods from ships, but he gave away furniture and food to the colonists so that they wouldn't have to pay English prices or taxes (Chap. XX, p. 320). But this was before the War of Independence, so the British merchants, both at sea and on land, demanded he be stopped, and the Virginia governor likewise would have wanted him dead because of the lost tax revenue.

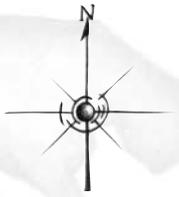


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A N S W E R K E Y

Geography

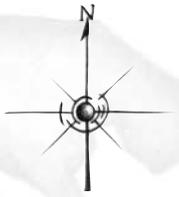
1. Where is Ocracoke Island? Is it a true island?
It is a large, relatively stable sandbar, as are all the Outer Banks off the North Carolina coast.
2. Where is Teach's Hole? What happened there?
Teach's Hole is an area near the village at the southern point of Ocracoke Island, where Blackbeard lived and died.
3. Where is the Graveyard of the Atlantic? How has it earned its name?
The Graveyard of the Atlantic is the area of ocean just off the Outer Banks that is notoriously tricky to navigate. It has hundreds of shipwrecks on the ocean floor.
4. Name some of the birds and ocean creatures mentioned that a person might see on Ocracoke.
Pelicans, dolphins, sand dollars, and blue crabs (Chap. III).
5. Where are the Diamond Shoals? Why would they cause such problems for ships?
They are shifting underwater sandbars in an area just off Ocracoke Island that make it impossible for any boat to navigate that area.
6. Why do the kids keep saying that there can't be a tunnel underneath Ocracoke?
Because Ocracoke Island is really a sandbar, and sand is too prone to caving in to create a tunnel.
7. How big is Ocracoke Village?
One mile long and a half-mile wide (Chap. XII).
8. Where is the infamous Bermuda Triangle? What makes it notorious?
The area of the Bermuda Triangle roughly starts at Florida, runs up the Atlantic coast to the Carolinas, over to Bermuda in the Atlantic, down to Puerto Rico, and then back to Florida. There have been reports of ships that disappear and compasses that behave very strangely.



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9. How long is the island?
Thirteen miles long.
10. What makes South Beach so unusual?
A person can see stars all the way down to the horizon on all sides (Chap. XVIII).
11. Mrs. McNemish had been told that a deep well couldn't exist on the island, because Ocracoke was only a sandbar and the water from such a well would be undrinkable. Why would that be?
Because the well would hit saltwater, which would make the water undrinkable (Chap. XX).



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ESSAY QUESTIONS

Mystery at Blackbeard's Cove, like any quality fiction, raises very real, very common issues. These essay questions provide an opportunity for students to examine those questions—questions of morality, ethics, loyalty, duty, and relationships. It also provides a place for students to take these issues and apply them to their own lives, and to raise self-awareness of themselves, their families, and their communities.

1. The kids broke a lot of rules/laws in order to bury Mrs. McNemish at sea. Do you think what they did was right or wrong? What would you have done in their place? Do you have anyone in your life who reminds you of Mrs. McNemish?
2. There is a lot of play between dreams and reality in the book. Were dreams strictly dreams? Describe the relationship between the ghosts and the living characters. Do dreams play a part in your own reality?
3. Describe the kids' relationships with each other. Do they love each other or hate each other? Do you have relationships like theirs in your life?
4. Discuss the believability of the characters Billy, Stefanie, Daniel, and Mark. What effect do the personalities of the characters have on the plot and how everything works out? Do the characters help make the plot more believable? What do you think would happen if you and your friends were faced with an adventure like this?
5. How do the people of Ocracoke feel about their island? How do you feel about your own community? What is similar? What is different? How do you think the everyday lives of the main characters are different from your own?