CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

Pre-reading Activity
As a pre-reading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a “0” next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE READING</th>
<th>AFTER READING</th>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Perseverance is always rewarded.</td>
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<td>Friends should always support your ideas, no matter what.</td>
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<td>When in danger, it is best to play it safe rather than take a risk.</td>
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<td>First impressions are always the right ones.</td>
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**Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R.L. 4.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. S.L. 4.1., 4.2., 4.3.**

EXPLORING FISH FINELLI: *SEAGULLS DON’T EAT PICKLES* + *OPERATION FIREBALL* THROUGH WRITING AND RESEARCH:

The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts or alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

- At the opening of *Seagulls Don’t Eat Pickles* readers learn that for Fish, the Captain Kidd Classic boat race as part of the Lobster-Palooza festival is the pinnacle event of the summer; what is it about competing in this event that is so important to him? How does Fish’s desire to do well in the race motivate him? Have you ever had a goal that was equally important to you? What did you do to ensure you successfully met your goal? What are your earliest impressions of Roger and T.J.? Do you find them to be good friends to Fish? Using examples from the story to support your position.
Why does Fish and Roger’s “Code Orange” of Bug Patrol Operations prove to be so tricky to execute? In your opinion, does their capture and release policy offer readers an idea of what kind of boys they are?

What role does the Captain play in Fish's life? Why do you think he is so generous to Fish? In what ways is his influence on Fish evident throughout the story?

Describe Fish Finelli. What makes him a dynamic character? Is he the type of friend you would want? Why or why not?

Before taking the Captain's boat out onto the water, Fish insists that everyone put on their PFD's (Personal Flotation Devices). Why is this important, and what can we learn about Fish from his expectation of his passengers?

Consider the friendship of Fish, Roger, and T.J. In what ways does their interaction with each other indicate how they feel about each other?

While taking out the Captain's whaler, Fish tells his friends, “Horsepower isn't magic, it's a measure of power.” What does Fish's understanding of this tell us about his intelligence?

Readers are first introduced to Bryce in Seagulls Don't Eat Pickles as he has an interaction with Fish and his friends on the water. What can readers infer about Bryce based on his interaction with Fish and his friends on the water? Throughout the first novel and Operation Fireball, do you see any changes in Bryce’s character? In your opinion what prompts him to behave the way he does?

Why do you think Fish feels compelled to accept Bryce's bet? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not? Have you ever been in a similar situation? If so, how did you deal with it?

Bryce tells Fish and his friends, “Babies playing pirates is all you are.” In your opinion, why does Bryce act this way toward them?

Throughout the novels, new chapters are introduced by funny or interesting titles like “The Librarian's Got the Booty!!” or “Clam-Dunk!” Of all the featured chapter titles between the two novels, which was your favorite and why?

By snooping through the library, Fish and his friends discover they may not be the only one searching for the treasure map of Captain Kidd; how does this knowledge motivate them to work harder?

Describe Mr. Mann, the director of the Whooping Hollow Library. What is it about him that fascinates the boys so much?

After Bryce and Fish get into an altercation because Bryce makes fun of Fish’s father’s job, Mrs. Lyons tells them, “Boys, that’s enough. This is a garden party, not a boxing ring”, yet when she walks away, Fish is sure he sees her smile at him. What does this gesture likely tell us about her opinion of Bryce?

As a form of retaliation, Bryce locks Fish in the basement; though his motivation is to get back at Fish, he actually does him a great favor. How is this possible?

Considering the ending of Fish Finelli: Seagulls Don't Eat Pickles, what do you predict is in store for Fish, Roger, and T.J. in Operation Fireball?

The opening chapter of Operation Fireball is entitled “10,000 Ways That Won't Work” and readers find Fish, Roger, and T.J. working diligently to overcome the problems they are having with their boat’s motor which they name “The Seagull”. What does their reaction to the challenges they face indicate about their character? In your opinion, what are the most creative or clever things this trio do to overcome their obstacles?

After finding Captain Kidd's treasure, the boys chose to invest their money in purchasing The Fireball, an older whaling boat. Do you think they've invested their money wisely? Why or why not?

Why does Fish feel so committed to winning the Captain Kidd Classic? Do you find his motivation (to beat Bryce Billings) appropriate?

After unsuccessfully attempting to start his boat’s motor, Fish invokes the words of Thomas Edison and declares, “I have not failed. I've just found ten thousand ways that won't work.” Do you agree with this statement? How do you work to overcome the challenges you face?

Consider Fish's reaction to meeting Clementine. In witnessing her in a conversation on her phone, Fish overhears her declare, “You care more about your boat than about me!” To whom do you think she's speaking? How do their initial conversation and her interest in the race foreshadow the events at the end of the novel?
Throughout the novel, illustrated factoids are imbedded on the page to provide further information and understanding of things referenced in the book. Which of these did you find most interesting and why?

When Bryce challenges Fish to a race to Get Lost Island, Fish accepts the bet though he is weary of the weather. Do you think Fish makes the right choice to race Bryce anyway?

Why do you think Clementine chooses to enter the Captain Kidd Classic disguised? Why is everyone so surprised when she places first? What does her sharing the prize and trophy with Fish tell us about her character?

Consider the cast of secondary characters in Seagulls Don’t Eat Pickles and Operation Fireball. Who are your favorite or least favorite characters and why?

Using the phrase, “This is a story about...” supply five words to describe Fish Finelli. Explain your choices.

What did you like best about the novels’ cover art and interior illustrations? Did these images help you imagine the characters better? Why or why not?

Using the phrase, “In these stories, friendship means...”, discuss the importance of being a good friend in these two Fish Finelli installments. Explain your choices.


**ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH:**

The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts or alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

- Fish declares that his inspiration to keep working toward finding a working solution for broken motor is rooted in the philosophy and words of inventor, Thomas Edison. Examine and explore the life and work of Edison, considering the following:
  - What were his greatest scientific contributions?
  - Besides the phonograph, what else did he invent?
  - Are there modern inventions that can be linked back to Edison’s work?
  - What were the best challenges he had to face as a scientist and inventor?

- When Fish and Bryce engage in a race toward Get Lost Island, storms and lightning cause the boys and their friends to take refuge on the island until they can safely return home. Using print and digital resources, learn more about lightning, making sure to consider the following:
  - What are the properties of lightning?
  - What causes it?
  - What is the relationship between lightning and thunder?
  - Why is being on a boat (and in the water) so dangerous?
  - Synthesize your new knowledge and create an infographic which summarizes what you’ve learned.

- Though hired by English King William III to hunt down pirate ships and retrieve their treasures, Captain William Kidd had a tragic ending to his life. Using library resources and the Internet, research Captain William Kidd being sure to consider the following:
  - Where and when was he born?
  - When did he become a sailor?
  - How did he become known by King William III?
  - What were his most famous voyages?
  - Why was he believed to be a pirate himself?
  - Are there any surviving artifacts from him?

  After gathering facts, create an original slideshow which highlights newly acquired knowledge using a presentation product such as Prezi or PowerPoint.

- During his time at sea, Captain Kidd had a number of memorable adventures. Using basic information you have learned about his escapades, create a digital journal or diary in the voice of Captain Kidd detailing what you experienced using Smore (www.smore.com). To prepare, create an outline using the five W’s: who, what, when, where, and why. Remember to write in first person and give special attention to sensory imagery (what you saw, smelled, heard, etc.).

- SEAGULLS DON’T EAT PICKLES is the super-secret password of Fish, Roger, and T.J. Using your library and the internet, research to find out more about what other famous code names and purposes of use for them. Using Glogster, create a digital presentation to share your findings.
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH (CONTINUED...)

• In the Fish Finelli series, interesting inventions, animals, and people are highlighted and featured throughout the novels; using what you learned from the books as a starting point, research one of the following features to gather additional information:

  - Archimedes Principle
  - Caesar Augustus
  - Pieces of Eight
  - Compass
  - John Glen
  - Marco Polo
  - Widow's Walk
  - Fur Elise
  - Emu
  - Oysters
  - Walkie-Talkie
  - Ospreys
  - Horsespower
  - White Flag
  - Microwave
  - Stingray
  - Nikola Tesla

After learning more about your selection, create a presentation with Sliderocket (www.sliderocket.com) to search your findings.

• One of the goals of Mr. Mann and those in Fish's community to help Lyons Island become a registered historical landmark as a means of protecting the historic property and the wildlife which inhabits the land. Why does having this distinction afford it protection? Research to learn more about registered historical landmarks. Are there any in your community? What about in your state? Select one and consider the following: What is it about this landmark that makes it distinctive? When did it receive its status? What other interesting or unique features does it have? Using Museum Box (www.museumbox.com), create an interactive box to share your findings.

**Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. W. 4.7., 4.8, 4.9.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

FISH FINELLI: SEAGULLS DON’T EAT PICKLES

When bully Bryce Billings bets Fish Finelli that he can't find Captain Kidd’s legendary long-lost treasure, Fish and his friends embark on a quest to find real-life pirate treasure. Between sneaking into the library to track down Captain Kidd's map, stowing away on a boat, and trespassing on an island, Fish and his friends have their work cut out for them. But will Fish actually be able to find Captain Kidd’s booty and win the bet? Appropriate for both boys and girls, this first book in the Fish Finelli series will inspire readers to use their imaginations, learn about the world around them, and appreciate the bonds of friendship.

FISH FINELLI: OPERATION FIREBALL

When Bryce Billings says he will clobber Fish Finelli in the Captain Kidd Classic boat race, Fish has no choice but to accept the bet. But Fish’s 1970s Whaler with a broken motor is no match for Bryce’s new, top-of-the-line, 9.9-horsepower Viper—even if Fish, Roger, and T. J. can fix their measly 5-horsepower motor, it can’t compete with Bryce’s boat. With $9.63 between them, do the guys even have a chance at the Classic?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

E.S. FARBER is the mother of a boy who likes facts along with his fiction, which inspired her to write Fish Finelli. She has authored numerous books for children. She lives in Amagansett, New York.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

JASON BEENE is the art director of Callaway Digital Arts, teaches at MIT and RISD, makes games, and is father to two girls. He lives in Providence, Rhode Island.

This guide was created by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman’s University, specializing in children’s and young adult literature.

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