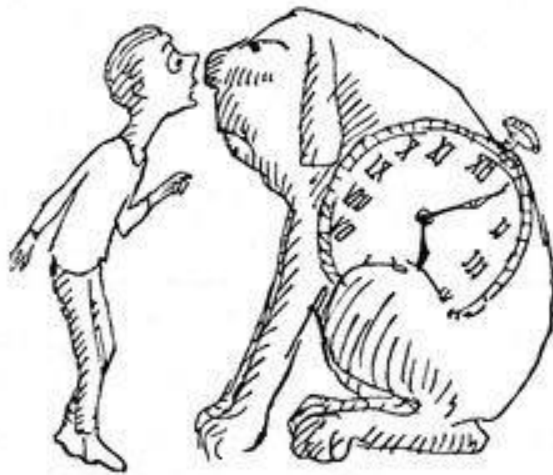


The Phantom Tollbooth

Spark Notes



The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 1: Milo

Summary by Rita

Milo is a normal boy who is constantly bored. He just doesn't know what to do with himself. He is constantly trying to find something new to do because he thinks practically everything in his life is uninteresting, extremely tiring and bland. Milo also finds himself disliking schoolwork. He just cannot find the point behind learning Maths or Geography. In fact, he thinks schooling is the greatest waste of time of all.

One day, Milo comes home to see a large package, addressed to him, on his bed. He is interested to see what is inside and finds himself opening the box. For someone who finds everything boring this was a very exciting surprise. He opens the package to reveal an unassembled turnpike tollbooth, a map, a book of traffic rules and an instruction manual. Milo puts the tollbooth together and gets into his small, toy car (one of the toys he was normally too bored to play with). As he arrives at the tollbooth, he is told to have a destination in mind that he would like to travel to. So, Milo picks the city of Dictionopolis randomly from the map. With that, he passes through the turnpike tollbooth turnstile.

Analysis:

When we meet Milo, it is clear that he is unhappy. We are told that he dislikes everything and that he is very, very bored. One day he comes home and finds a mysterious package on his bed. Inside, he finds a Tollbooth which he has to build himself. The Tollbooth is a barrier between two places. Without the right payment, you can't pass through and get to the other side. This could be a metaphor about how Milo is feeling at this point in his life. Perhaps he feels stuck, with no way to move on.

Secondly, the fact that Milo has to assemble the Tollbooth himself, instead of finding it already made, shows that the journey Milo will experience must be something he creates himself. The only way he can begin his adventure is through hard work, and a bit of imagination.

Comprehension Questions: True or False?

1. Milo is a very happy young boy. True/ False
2. Milo is constantly looking for something new to do. True/ False
3. Milo loves learning, especially Maths and Geography True/ False
4. The Turnpike Tollbooth was already built when he found it. True/ False
5. Milo chooses a place on the map to visit. True/ False

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Chapter 2: Beyond Expectations

Summary by Anna

Once he has chosen his destination as the city of Dictionopolis, Milo passes through the turnstile and finds himself on a long road in the countryside. Milo is shocked to discover that the tollbooth is not a toy at all. As he continues on his way, long before he reaches Dictionopolis he stumbles across a land called Expectations, where a little man approaches his car. When Milo asks the Whether man, who has a habit of saying everything 3 times, about how to get to Dictionopolis, the Whether man talks non-stop about the weather and navigation. Finding this unhelpful, Milo decides to leave expectations and try and find Dictionopolis alone.

Milo presses on and shortly after leaving expectations he becomes bored by the increasingly winding and curvy roads. His mind wanders off and he becomes very drowsy. Soon the car moved slower and slower, until it was hardly moving at all. He mutters to himself 'I wonder where I am' and a voice that seemed to be coming from far away told him that he was in the Doldrums. At first, he couldn't see who spoke but after speaking a few more times, the voice had moved so close Milo jumped with surprise. Sitting on his shoulder was a small creature exactly the colour of his shirt. It introduces itself and its friends as Lethargarians and describe their idle lives in the doldrums, explaining their odd laws such as laughing and thinking and speculating being illegal!

Suddenly a large dog with a clock for a body comes running up, frightening the Lethargarians away. The Watchdog, whose job it is to make sure nobody wastes time, suspiciously asks Milo what he is doing in the Doldrums. When Milo replies that he is "just killing time," the watchdog becomes furious and tells Milo that the only thing worse than wasting time is killing it. He tells Milo that if he wants to leave the Doldrums he only needs to do the opposite of what got him there. Since Milo drifted into the Doldrums by not thinking, he must concentrate on

thinking. He tries with no success but after a few attempts his car begins to move. Soon he is back on his way to Dictionopolis with the watchdog.

Analysis:

Juster's main theme in chapter 2 is that of Milo's feelings of boredom disappear as soon as he leaves his old world behind. Instead of being frightened by the sudden transportation from his bedroom to a country highway in an unknown land, Milo is so busy noticing what a beautiful day it is that he forgets to be scared.

His brief stop in Expectations highlights the excitement he feels and Milo becomes eager to see more. To linger in Expectations, Milo realizes, is pointless since all one can do is wonder (asking "whether" questions) about where he can go next and what he can do.

When the distance between Expectations, where he comes up with ideas about the land he is about to tour, and the city of Dictionopolis proves to be very long and winding, Milo loses interest and begins to daydream. Here we see Juster's more specific theme: Milo allows his mind to wander, and so he physically wanders into the Doldrums, the land of ultimate boredom and laziness. The physical and the mental become one. Not only do Milo's physical surroundings jump-start his mental process, but here his mental processes change his physical surroundings. Juster suggests that a person can affect one with the other, exciting a boring place by thinking exciting thoughts or getting excited by finding an exciting place.

The introduction of the watchdog—who eventually becomes Milo's closest friend in the Lands Beyond—and his suggestion that Milo can escape the Doldrums simply by putting his mind to work, underscores Juster's larger theme of finding interesting things everywhere, including seemingly boring places. All Milo has to do is use his imagination to get him back on track and speeding towards a more exciting and interesting place.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Who is the Whether Man? What are some characteristics that make him unusual?
2. Why does Milo find himself in the Doldrums?
3. Who are the Lethargarians?
4. Who is the Watchdog? What is his main job?
5. How does Milo get out of the Doldrums?

BONUS: What does Milo learn from his journey into the Doldrums?

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Chapter 3: Welcome to Dictionopolis

Summary by Patrick

A boy called Milo and a watchdog (who later introduces himself as Tock) are in a car, being driven by Tock. Tock starts a conversation with Milo about the history of time; what it all means, and the importance of it.

They soon reach the city of Dictionopolis, where they meet a posh looking gateman. The gateman assumes that they are arriving at the city for the 'word market' and repeatedly asks them whether they are going to 'buy or sell.' Milo is confused and says they don't have anything to sell, and that they're not planning on buying anything. The gateman hands them an old small medallion on a chain that he retrieves from a suitcase. It is engraved with the words 'WHY NOT.' The gateman then lets them in.

Soon Milo and Tock arrive at the market where five "very tall, thin" gentlemen meet them. They introduce themselves as the Duke of Definition, the Minister of Meaning, the Earl of Essence, the Count of Connotation and the Undersecretary of Understanding. The five men open scrolls and, reading from them, tell Milo and Tock that they are part of the cabinet of the King. They speak in a very confusing way, with the five of them saying a different word each one after the other, but with all the words meaning the same thing. They seem confused that Milo doesn't know the fact that words grow on trees, and soon explain how the word market works, telling Milo and Tock that if you want to sell a word at the word market, it must be a word that exists.

The five men also show Milo and Tock that whatever you say in Dictionopolis, it comes true. They told Milo and Tock to enjoy themselves at the market, and Milo and Tock immediately started walking away and soon were telling each other how exciting the market looked.

Analysis:

Juster creates a sense of intrigue and excitement from the start, introducing the scene with Milo and Tock, the latter of which strangely makes a ticking sound. Juster does not initially explain where they are going and what they are doing, not until they arrive at their destination, presenting some mystery. When Juster introduces the gateman, he describes him as quite loud, but we soon discover that he is warm-hearted (as he hands the Milo the medallion). The contrast teaches us one main theme of the book; to judge someone by what you first see.

As Milo and the watchdog, Tock, enter the city, the five men appear. As mentioned before, the five men all say different words that mean the same thing e.g. greetings, salutations, welcome, good afternoon and hello. This could be interpreted as to entertain the reader and draw them into the magic of the book. It is also a good way of learning that there is more than one exciting way to say something.

This theme of entertaining through magic is shown again at the end of the chapter. As previously discussed, the men prove that in Dictionopolis, if you say something, it becomes true. We have seen this before, in the Doldrums when Milo casually mentioned that he was there to 'kill time'. Tock finds this a very serious offense. From then on, Milo learns that you must be careful about what you say. This could also show how differing this imaginary world is to the real world, also helping to draw the reader in.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What was the reason the Gateman gave Milo so that he could enter Dictionopolis? Do you think this is a good reason?
2. Milo meets 5 very tall and thin gentlemen. Who are they?
3. The men say the same thing in 5 different ways. Can you think of 5 different ways to say these words?

BIG	SMALL	GOOD

4. How do words grow in Dictionopolis?
5. Write one rule that you have learnt from Dictionopolis.

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Chapter 4: Confusion in the Market Place

Summary by Sonny

Milo and Tock arrive at the busy Market Place of Dictionopolis. They walk past many stalls of people selling various types of words, phrases and letters. Milo and Tock look around at each of the stalls while being persuaded and approached by enthusiastic sellers to buy the words that each stall is selling. As they reach the final stalls of the market, they approach a stall that says 'DO IT YOURSELF' where there are bins filled with each letter of the alphabet where shoppers can buy letters and create their own words! Milo samples some of the letters like an A, and discovers that they are just like they'd expect them to taste – 'sweet and delicious'.

Milo, Tock and stall-keeper are then approached by the Spelling Bee, a giant bee who spells out any word you say and catches your attention by buzzing above you! The Spelling Bee introduces himself to Milo while spelling out many of the words in his sentences as he speaks. Milo then tests the Spelling Bee on how fast he can spell vegetable, and he spells it in just over 10 seconds.

Just as the Spelling Bee is telling the story of how he went from being just a normal bee to a magical spelling bee, he is interrupted by someone shouting 'BALDERDASH' extremely loudly. From behind a wagon steps out a beetle-like creature. The Spelling Bee introduces him as the Humbug, calling him 'an unlikable fellow'. The Humbug is dressed up in smart, presentable clothes and carries a cane with him. The Humbug and the Spelling Bee then begin to argue with each other. As the Humbug gets closer to Milo, he puts his arm around Milo's neck.

The conflict reaches a climax as the Spelling Bee knocks the Humbug's hat off with his wing. The two start fighting as the Spelling Bee buzzes and waves his wings at the Humbug, and the Humbug waves his cane at the Spelling Bee. Then, as if things couldn't get much worse, the Humbug toppled over, knocking all the stalls of words and letters so that they became scrambled together. Milo fell on top of him too! The Humbug was left buried, under a pile of words.

Analysis:

In this chapter we see Norton Juster expand on the location of Dictionopolis as we discover the marketplace. We also meet two more characters from Dictionopolis, the Spelling Bee and the Humbug. In this chapter we again see the use of many puns, idioms (using words or expressions that have a figurative meaning rather than a

literal meaning) and wordplay. An example of this is the character of the Spelling Bee as his name describes exactly who he is and what he does! This is an example of wordplay as in a 'spelling bee' competition you have to spell different words that you are given just like the Spelling Bee does during the novel. The Spelling Bee's competitive personality can also reflect the competition aspect of a spelling bee contest. Thus, he is an example of wordplay. Overall through the use of puns, idioms and wordplay, Juster expands on the world of the phantom tollbooth specifically the land of Dictionopolis in chapter 4.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Write your own description of the Word Market place.
 - a. What different types of words can you buy?
 - b. How much do you think some of the words cost?
 - c. What are the tastiest words in the market?
2. Why do the Spelling Bee and the Humbug get into an argument?
3. What is an idiom? Can you give one example from the text?

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Chapter 5: Officer Shrift

Summary by Rosie

The consequences of the fight between the Humbug and the Spelling Bee are discussed in Chapter 5 of the *Phantom Tollbooth*. During the struggle, all of the words and letters became mixed up, causing huge disruption in the marketplace. As a result, no one is making any sense and people are starting to talk nonsense.

Officer Shrift is summoned to deal with the situation. Then, the humbug – who was responsible for the mess – blames the situation on Tock and Milo. Shrift then also accuses Milo of many other crimes, none of which are actually his fault. This list contains offences as random and irrelevant as Milo forgetting his birthday. Milo and Tock are sentenced to 6 million years in prison.

In prison, Milo meets a witch, who then explains that she is a Which, not a witch. (Slightly confusing). She explains that she used to advise people which words to use, but told too many people not to say anything. This nearly ruined the economy of Dictionopolis which is why she is in jail. She then goes on to tell Milo and Tock a story in the next chapter.

Analysis:

This chapter introduces the character Officer Shrift, who is described as being incredibly short. This introduces the idea of 'short shrift' which means to give something unsympathetic, curt treatment. This could foreshadow what happens later in the chapter where the officer doesn't listen to Milo's side of the story and just convicts him.

The whole chapter focuses on demonstrating the unfairness and ridiculousness of the rules and laws in Dictionopolis. It also demonstrates the city's dependence on the words, both through the disturbance in the marketplace and through the Which's story. It illustrates how the place's social and economical wealth both depend very heavily on the words and letters they use. It is also used to introduce the characters Officer Shrift and The Which.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Who is Officer Shrift?
2. What does it mean to feel 'miserly'?
3. Why could no one speak in an understandable way?
4. Why did Tock get into trouble?

5. What was Tock and Milo's sentence in prison?

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Chapter 6: Faintly Macabre's Story

Summary by Daisy

Chapter 6 starts with the Which, Faintly Macabre, telling Milo and his friends the story of Rhyme and Reason. She recounts the horrific place that the Lands Beyond were when they were first created. One day, a young prince from across the sea arrived and founded a city that would become the Kingdom of Wisdom. In time, he had two sons who went out in the wilderness to start their own cities, one founding Dictionopolis and the other creating Digitopolis.

One day, the king found a basket in his garden with twin baby girls inside. The king was overjoyed. He named the girls Rhyme and Reason and he raised them as his own. When the king died, he left commands that the Kingdom of Wisdom was to be divided equally between his two sons, who would also have the duty of looking after Rhyme and Reason.

Over the years, Azaz and the Mathemagician grew more and more dependent upon the princess's wise judgment as the brothers became further competitive and distrustful. Matters reached a boiling point when they began debating about whether numbers or letters were more important. The two rulers brought their disagreement to the princesses who, after careful consideration, announced that numbers and words were equally important.

Analysis:

In this chapter, the story of Rhyme and Reason was fully developed. The rise of the Kingdom of Wisdom and the division between Azaz and the Mathemagician not only explains the literal disappearance of the princesses but also relates to the theme of education. Rhyme and Reason do not represent the world of words or numbers, but they represent **common sense**—something that is essential to wisdom but is not taught in schools. The argument about numbers and letters, referring here to the common disagreements among scholars and students, is pure nonsense, a fact that only the princesses, in their wisdom, can see. They are the ones who the brothers rely on to help rule the kingdom.

Thanks to Faintly Macabre's tale, Milo also recognizes the need for Rhyme and Reason and, as a result, Azaz realizes that Milo is the ideal person to assist and ensure their return. Since Milo conquered his boredom and laziness in the first

section of the book, it is suggested his next mission will be to discover true wisdom, which is symbolized by the two princesses. His journey to Digitopolis and trek through the Mountains of Ignorance represent not only a physical journey but an educational one as well. In order to find wisdom, Juster seems to be implying that Milo will need to learn some lessons in the world of the Lands Beyond.

Comprehension Questions: True or False

1. Dictionopolis is the city of numbers. True/ False
2. The King found one baby in a basket. True/ False
3. When the King died, his entire kingdom was given to one of his sons. True/ False
4. The girls that the King found were called Rhyme and Reason. True/ False
5. When Azaz and the Mathemagician started arguing about what was more important, words or numbers, Rhyme and Reason said that both were equally important. True/ False

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Chapter 7: The Royal Banquet

Summary by Alfie

In this chapter Milo finds himself being ushered towards the Royal Banquet of Dictionopolis. He follows the Duke, the Count, the Undersecretary, the Minister, and the Earl to the banquet hall. Milo is the last, and very late, guest to the banquet. He enters a vast room filled with many people shouting and arguing. They're all sitting around a long table finely decorated with gold plates and linen napkins. At the end of the table sits a throne covered in crimson cloth. Above the thrones, hangs the royal coat of arms, flanked by the flags of Dictionopolis.

As he enters the hall he notices many of the people he met at the market, including the Letter man, the Humbug and Spelling Bee, as well as Officer Shrift. Everyone appears a bit annoyed due to being forced to wait for the last guest. As he enters the hall he's told that he must choose the menu by the Humbug. As he tries to think, he hears loud trumpets announcing the entrance of King Azaz.

Azaz questions Milo before allowing to sit next to him as the guest of honour. Once sat, Milo is asked whether he has any special talents or skills. Once Milo states that he has no talents except he can count to 1000 he is shouted at by the king to never mention numbers unless necessary. Milo is then asked to decide on the menu, he then states that they should eat a light meal. In an instant, trays filled with light are brought out. He asked to change it and decided on a square meal. Again, trays are brought out in an instant covered in steaming colourful squares. Again, he is asked to change it but is then interrupted and asked to recite a speech.

He begins to recite a boring speech he hears adults recite, however he is quickly stopped, the king saying that he mustn't talk all day. Then in turn all the guests recite an order of their favourite foods. Again, in an instant, trays are put in front of every guest filled with their order. Milo is presented with a very unappetizing meal compared to the rest of the guests. He can't eat any of what's in front of him and decided to wait for dessert.

After their meal Azaz declares that they have a very exciting announcement, that the half bakery has been preparing all day for this banquet. Milo doesn't understand but is then told that the half bakery is where all half-baked ideas come from. Suddenly, a large tray is brought in covered with hundreds of baked goods. Everyone surrounds the cart and begins eating. Milo is told to eat one but just wraps one up for later, one saying "Everything happens for the best".

Analysis:

This chapter uses words and Milo's naivety to create an atmosphere of confusion but understanding. This is one of Milo's first major interactions with the people of Dictionopolis and he still does not truly understand the ways and customs of this city. For example, when asked to recite a speech Milo immediately starts a conventional speech. However, when the rest of the guests recite their "speeches" they are all conventional meal orders. The lesson that Milo learns here is similar to a lesson he learnt earlier: to be careful what you say, because it could be taken literally.

This chapter shows that this world is vastly different from the one Milo is used to. The writer wants the readers to know that this world is going to subvert expectations and change how readers understand the world that Milo has been thrown into. Milo, and the reader, are learning valuable lessons from the people in the Land Beyond.

Comprehension Questions:

1. *Milo suggests that they eat a 'light meal' for starters. The waiters bring out plates full of light.*
Is this what he meant? If not, what do you think Milo actually meant when he said 'light meal'?
2. *When asked if he has any talents, Milo says that he has no talent except he can count to 1000.*
What is your talent? It can be as small or big as you want.
3. *If you had to order some food at this feast, what would you order?*
Design a food to have at King Azaz's Banquet. The funnier and sillier the better!
4. *At the end of the chapter, Milo takes a half-baked idea with the message "everything happens for the best". Do you agree? Write some thoughts about it and share with your friends.*

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By Norton Juster

Chapter 8: The Humbug Volunteers

Summary by Melody

When the meal is over, the King summons everyone's attention, and everyone rushes out of the hall to eat dinner. Milo is baffled as to how they can eat dinner after the large banquet they just had. The King decides that he would like to change the order of eating dinner and the banquet, which gives Milo the space to ask if it is possible for Rhyme and Reason to return to the Kingdom.

The King states that it is impossible, the Humbug (who thinks he made himself ill from all the food he'd eaten) suggests that Milo could do it, along with the help of Tock. He explains how Milo will be able to get Rhyme and Reason back by going through the "harrowing and hazardous countryside," up the Mountains of Ignorance and climbing a steep stairway to reach the Castle in the Air. This is where they can be found.

King Azaz volunteers the Humbug to go with Tock and Milo in order to help guide them to the Castle in the Air. Milo is quite shocked by this idea, but his friend (the Humbug) helps cool his nerves by continuously motivating Milo. He does this by telling him that he believes in him and that he will restore the greatness of the kingdom, which appears to be working at the end of the Chapter.

Before they leave, the King gives Milo and Tock a special box containing many words as a gift in order to guarantee them safety in their mission of rescuing the princesses from the Castle in the Air.

Analysis:

The author (Norton Juster) argues that knowledge and communication will save us from the pitfalls of ignorance. He uses Azaz's gift of the box of words to show that they can be powerful when in a fight against idiocy, therefore the words that Azaz gives him are a symbol of the power of knowledge.

Norton also uses opposite ideas to create an amusing atmosphere to keep serious subjects of danger light and not too heavy on the readers. An example of this would be how the people cheer when Milo leaves as they do not care for arrivals. All that pleases them is to see someone leave, as this is out of the ordinary.

Comprehension Questions:

Why do you think the title of this chapter is "The Humbug Volunteers"?

- a. Who volunteers Humbug to go on the dangerous journey?
- b. Why is it important that the Humbug joins the journey?
- c. What do we learn about the importance of motivation and encouraging other people to do difficult things?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 9: *It all depends how you look at things*

Characters involved:

- Milo
- The humbug
- Tock
- Alec Bings

Chapter Setting:

- The unknown lands that lay between Dictionopolis and Digitopolis
- “ All traces of Dictionopolis had vanished”

Summary by Alex



Milo and his new friends are now far from Dictionopolis, motoring along in their car whilst taking in the beautiful scenery. They stop to enjoy a quick panoramic view when a young boy catches their attention.

Milo looks up to a boy around his age, suspended in mid-air, with his shiny polished shoes in Milo's eyeline. Milo learns that in this boy's family, everyone grows down, not up, so when he is fully grown, his feet will finally be touching the ground. So when he was born, he was at the height he would have grown up to be.

The mysterious boy introduces himself as Alec Bings, a rather knowledgeable young man. Alec begins to lecture Milo about “*Point of views*”, and Milo learns a lot from him, such as how most people in the area grow just like Alec, as well as how point of view effects someone's life. For Alec Bings, he will only ever see the world from one point of view. Bings finds it strange that people in Milo's world grow from the ground up, calling it a ‘silly system’ because ‘you always see things in a different way’ as you grow older. It turns out that Alec Bings not only sees things from high in the air, but also sees through things. He says, ‘I can see whatever is inside, behind, around’ and everything else. All except ‘whatever happens to be right in front of my nose’.

Analysis:

In this chapter and beyond, Milo meets new people and the theme of education continues in Juster's (the author) novel as all the people he meets on his journey teach him something new. During chapter 9, Milo learns about perspective from Alec Bings. Bings was born with the unique, but unfortunate fate to never change

perspective, as most people do, as Alec's point of view will always stay at the same level, meaning he will always have the same 'grown-up' outlook. This links back to the novel's overall theme of education, as well as things around not making much sense.

Comprehension Questions:

6. What does 'perspective' mean?
7. Exploring the idea of getting older, and therefore taller, Alec Bings doesn't understand why it would be good to see things in a different way. Milo disagrees.
 - a. Think of something that you used to be scared of. Are you still scared of it? Do you think you'll still be scared of it in the future?
For example, spiders, heights or vegetables!
 - b. Think of something that used to be difficult for you but isn't now.
For example, maths, sums, science, reading.
8. Why do you think it is important that we learn things, and our opinion changes? Think about what Milo used to think about life, and what he thinks now.

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Chapter 10: A Colourful Symphony

Summary by Abdul

Alec, Milo, Tock, and the Humbug continue their stroll in the forest and find themselves at the edge of a large clearing. Inside lies a magnificent metropolis. The city, Alec says, is called Illusions and is really just a mirage. Its twin city, Reality, turns out to be all around the travellers.

Alec explains that Reality was once as beautiful as Illusions, but people that lived in Reality decided that things would be much more efficient if they went everywhere as fast as possible and didn't bother to stop and appreciate things along the way. As a result of their actions, the city withered away.

Alec next leads the group to an enormous open-air orchestra concert of over a thousand musicians, all conducted by Chroma the Great. Chroma waves his arms, and the musicians seem to be playing their instruments, although Milo doesn't hear anything. Alec explains that this orchestra is responsible for providing all the colours in the world. Milo meets Chroma, who talks about what a dull place the world would be without colours before Chroma hurries off to bed. Before he goes, Chroma asks Milo to keep an eye on the orchestra overnight and to wake him at 5:23 a.m. for the sunrise.

Analysis:

The 'nature of reality' is the theme, if you like, of this chapter. The man in the house with four sides represents an interesting exploration of this theme; he is the smallest giant, the largest midget, the fattest thin man, and the thinnest fat man, and yet he is the same man. The reality is that a person experiences only depends on how a person perceives things.

The two cities. Reality and Illusions. create an interesting contrast in this chapter. Reality slowly vanishes because the people that live there slowly lose their interest in it. It has become invisible metaphorically and literally.

Afterwards, when Alec Bing leads the crew to the town, Milo expects the orchestra to play but instead the band produces no music, this makes Milo and his friends watch the orchestra instead, this drives the reader to think more imaginatively and create their own impression of the sounds and atmosphere created.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is a Mirage? Use a dictionary to help you.
2. Why did the city of Reality start to disappear?
3. How could they make Reality visible again?
4. Instead of playing music, what does Chroma's orchestra do?

The Phantom Tollbooth

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Chapter 11: Dischord and Dynne

Summary by Sammy

The chapter begins with Milo waiting until 5:23 in the morning to wake Chroma up for the sunrise. Milo wonders how it would feel to conduct the orchestra and colour the world by himself. As he was considering this idea he thought since it might be his only chance to try he would, but promised it would only be for a little while.

The start is perfect. After the piccolos caused different rays of light to flicker on the horizon, the other instruments joined in making the hills glow red, leaves & grass a lush green and then the entire forest its own individual colours. However, just at the point that Milo decides to wake up Chroma, everything starts spinning out of control. Instead of stopping, the instruments carry on playing, louder and louder, with the colours changing and becoming more and more vibrant until the whole world of colour went into madness and the sun rose and set 7 times. When everything seemed to be as it was before he had started, Milo woke everyone at 5:27. Chroma exclaims that it felt like he had slept for a week and that someday he would let Milo conduct the orchestra himself.

As they leave the forest of sight they stumble upon a little wagon which reads, KAKOFONOUS A. DISCHORD DOCTOR OF DISSONANCE. As they tiptoe towards the van, they hear a horrible crashing sound followed by a man who said, "Have you ever heard a whole set of dishes dropped from the ceiling to the floor?" Milo replies, "Not until now." To which the doctor who calls himself Kakofonous A. Dischord, with the A standing for AS LOUD AS POSSIBLE, invites them in so he can cure them from a lack of noise. He then makes a concoction which (he says) will stop them from ever hearing a beautiful sound again. He boasts how now, because of big cities, his horrible sounds are very popular and are used often. After all three rejected his strange concoction Dischord decides to show them the Dynne.

After the strange creature finishes of the vile looking concoction the 'doctor' explains that the awful Dynne is his assistant whom he raised to be his assistant. Milo who is confused about all of this asks, what a Dynne actually is? Which is responded to by questions about how when there is a terrible racket it is referred to as the awful din and that is who his assistant is. After a short argument about the importance of words and sounds. The three leave Dischord and Dynne to travel to Digitopolis where Dr. Dischord warns them of the Valley Of Sound and its dangers.

Analysis:

This chapter shows the progression that the protagonist has made throughout the story. This is shown at the beginning of the chapter where his curiosity causes him to try and run Chroma's orchestra. This shows his development as at the beginning of the novel Milo is not bothered and does not care about anything and is always where he doesn't want to be, but now he is being curious and trying things out and while they do not always work out, he is still enjoying himself.

Another example which shows Milo's progression is him rejecting the medicine made by Dischord. This is because at the beginning of the story he did not care about much at all and likely would've drunk it at the beginning of the story if it were offered to him however now he cares about his hearing and even exclaims that 'he didn't want to be cured of beautiful sounds' showing how he has become a more engaged and caring individual.

Overall, this chapter shows Milo's development through his curiosity to try conduct the sunrise and his rejection of the potion made by Dischord.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Milo wonders what it would be like to colour the world with the orchestra. Write a few ideas about how you would colour the world if you could. Example, "the sea would be different colours based on temperature. Hot would be red, cold would be blue"

-
-
-
-

2. What does Milo learn about trying something that he isn't ready for?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 12: The Silent Valley

Summary by Esme

Milo is mildly confused upon entry to the valley. He feels that it is a nice area, and is unsure of why he was warned about it. He is totally distracted by the beauty of the landscape. However, when they passed through a stone entrance, he feels a difference. He eventually picks up on the lack of sound, even coming from his own mouth. Eventually the entire crew realises. Humbug gets into a flap and leaps to his feet and Tock makes sure he still was keeping time; he was a watchdog after all! A feeling of dread came over Milo.

The crew eventually finds a swarm of angry silent people, with placards, protesting the lack of noise. Some of the signs read: HEAR HERE, DOWN WITH SILENCE & ALL QUIET IS NO DIET. As Milo approaches, the protesters seem desperate. They hold up placards begging for help. A man with a blackboard starts explaining why the sounds were no more; it was the result of a once kind ruler, known as the Soundkeeper, who grew tired of the ugly noises being brought in by newcomers, and ended up banning noises altogether. The man explains to Milo that he needs to steal a noise from the Soundkeeper, so they could fire it at her, freeing the other noises.

When they get to the fortress, Milo knocks on the door, and is thrilled that he can speak again. He is ushered in by the Soundkeeper, who was sitting by a speaker, playing silence. He is surprised by how talkative and nice the Soundkeeper is. She takes the crew on a tour around the vaults, showing all the stored sounds. She talks contentedly about how the workshops used to be, showing everyone around to all the areas where different sounds are stored & created. Milo tries to ask for a sound as a passing comment, but is refused fairly swiftly. Milo is shocked that sounds needed to be created, but the Soundkeeper shows him how. Eventually, when Milo is comfortable enough, he asks the Soundkeeper why she stopped making sound, to which she regretfully explains that people made such ugly sounds, it seemed only right to her to hold them all back. Milo considers objecting, but thought better of it, stopping himself at the beginning of his sentence. He nodded farewell to the Soundkeeper, deciding thank you wouldn't be the correct expression, after what had just happened.

Analysis:

This chapter presents the misuse of power. The society in the valley is an autocracy, meaning it is ruled by one person, and civilians have very little say in what happens

to them. When this happens, it is easy for a leader to become selfish and self absorbed, only doing things that benefit their own interest. This makes it harder for a leader to rule fairly, as they feel that what seems beneficial and right to them, is the right decision for others. The Soundkeeper is content with living in a world lacking noise, meaning she is blind to the needs and wants in her society, choosing to live in comfort the way she wants. She sees the world as fine, meaning she makes the assumption others do too. This has consequences, leading to mass protests, which we can infer from our reading of the novel, happen frequently, and angry civilians. This means people distrust their leader, making it difficult for leaders and civilians to make civil conversation, or see matters eye to eye, meaning matters cannot be sorted democratically. Juster uses this chapter as a cautionary tale of the consequences of selfishness.

Another reading might be that, to have free will and free speech, you must also have the potential for mistakes and bad things. The world cannot be completely perfect, otherwise it would be silent.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Briefly explain what you know about “freedom of speech”. Ask your teacher if you are not sure.
2. Why is freedom of speech important, even if we don’t agree with some of the things that people say?
3. Why do you think the Soundkeeper is nice and talkative, instead of evil and cruel to Milo? She stole the sounds of the village because they were ‘ugly’, but was this the right thing to do?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 13: Unfortunate Conclusions

Summary by Rosemary

At the beginning of the chapter 'Unfortunate Conclusions', Milo arrives back from the fortress and is asked by someone if he has managed to steal a sound from the fortress. He scribbles onto a blackboard that the sound was 'on the tip of his tongue'. This means that something was almost spoken but not yet. Milo hurries back to the angry mob where he deposits the sounds into the cannon. When the cannon is fired the sound flies towards the walls of the fortress and strikes it on the right side of the big door. This causes all the sounds in the vault to spill out.

The dust settles and Milo sees the Soundkeeper sitting on the floor, she is very understanding as he apologizes for destroying his fortress. She realized that it was a mistake to take away all sound and that silence wouldn't solve anything. Soon after, a character who goes by the name of Dynne comes running in with a huge bag of sounds that he doesn't find noisy enough. He soon reveals that he had collected nearly all the sounds left in the vault which the Soundkeeper accepts. As Dynne hurries off the Soundkeeper observes that without the unpleasant sounds we wouldn't enjoy the pleasant sounds as much.

She then says, if only rhyme and reason would return for, they may be able to fix that problem. When Milo tells the Soundkeeper that they were going to rescue Rhyme and Reason, she gives Milo a small brown package and wishes him good luck on his mission.

Milo, Tock, and the Humbug all get back into the car and start driving along the sea of knowledge. When they reach the island of conclusions they jump out of the car, but soon realise that it is easier to jump to conclusions than to swim. The meaning of the phrase 'to jump to conclusions' is to judge a situation without having enough information about it.

When they are there, they meet a man who doesn't seem to know who he is. After listening to him for a while they figured out that he was Canby. Canby's name is a combination of the words "can" and "be." Canby feels he is as generous as can be, as happy as can be, as sad as can be, and as clumsy as can be when the Humbug asks him to define himself. Canby always jumps to conclusions about his identity because he asks everyone on the island, "Who am I?" and gets conflicting answers. He gets stranded on the island because of this.

The three decide to swim through the sea of knowledge to the land. Milo and Tock are drenched in Knowledge, whereas the Humbug, who believes he already knows

everything, is completely dry. Milo says he's learned his lesson about jumping to conclusions, and the three travellers are soon back on their way.

Analysis:

In the Valley of Sound, Jester presents the theme of appreciating everyday life. This is a theme that appears throughout the whole adventure, but in this chapter, the city is totally silent. The sound has been taken away.

In this chapter we meet Dischord, who collects loud, awful sounds, and the SoundKeeper, who collects all other sounds and keeps them to herself. Both of these characters are excluding some sounds. They are preventing the free and ungoverned use of sounds by the public. This censoring prevents freedom of sound, loosely linking to freedom of speech.

Perhaps the most important thing that Milo learns in this chapter is that sound, and speech, is for everyone. What's more, he realises that beauty is a matter of perspective; everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good or bad sound. This is what makes sound free and valuable.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What does the phrase "on the tip of my tongue" mean?
2. What does the phrase "jump to conclusions" mean?
3. At the end of the chapter, Milo and the team swim through the sea of knowledge. Milo and Tock come out soaking wet while Humbug stays dry. What does this represent? What have the characters learnt?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 14: The Dodecahedron leads the way

Summary by Solea

On their way to Digitopolis Milo, Tock and The Humbug come by a fork in the road. Whilst they are busy arguing about how to get to Digitopolis, they come across a strange figure -the Dodecahedron. He has twelve faces each of which portray a different emotion. When Milo introduces himself, the Dodecahedron thinks that he has an extremely odd name and begins to wonder whether everyone with one face is called Milo. The Dodecahedron finds Milo's naming system very strange and confusing, and he explains that in Digitopolis, everything is named for what it is.

Then Milo asks which route will lead them to Digitoplois, and the Dodecahedron answers with a series of absurdly confusing word problems. The Dodecahedron explains that none of the three roads lead to Digitopolis, and that it was silly of Milo to think that. He then offers to personally escort, and hops in the car to join them.

Once they reach the outskirts of the city, they arrive at the Number Mine where numbers are shaped out of stone. When they set foot inside, they come across the mathematician who explains what they do in the mine, and then kindly invites them all to lunch.

Analysis:

The introduction to Digitopolis is very similar to the introduction to Dictionopolis: in both of them, Milo meets strange characters that confuse him and his companions. In this chapter Milo meets the unusual Dodecahedron who tends to change his face and his expression throughout his encounter with Milo. His different expressions are very similar to Azaz's five advisors who also confuse Milo. Therefore, this leads us to draw the conclusion that Dictionopolis and Digitopolis are very similar, no matter how much they may dislike each other.

Comprehension Questions:

1. How many faces does a Dodecahedron have? Circle the right answer.

8

10

12

14

2. Can you label each of these emotions?



The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 15: This way to infinity

Summary by Matilda

We begin this chapter with eight of the kingdom's strongest miners carrying a cauldron full of delicious soup-like food. The Mathemagician offers Tock, Milo and the Humbug dozens of servings - they eat the soup almost as fast as he can serve it. Eventually Milo realises that each bowl is making him slightly hungrier than before, and soon the three are almost starving. The Dodecahedron explains that it's the specialty of the kingdom - Subtraction Stew - which makes you hungrier and hungrier as you eat it. The Mathemagician says that in Digitopolis people eat when they're full until they're hungry, and is quite surprised to hear about Milo's supposedly backwards way of eating when he's hungry until he's full.

The group move on to the Mathemagician's office, the Mathemagician erasing and recreating their surroundings using his staff (shaped like a giant pencil). The room is circular with large arched windows and all the furniture is labelled with its dimensions. The room is carved with 360 degrees of a circle and hanging from the ceiling is a selection of devices for measuring and calculating.

The Mathemagician demonstrates his powers by multiplying himself, drawing a line and using it as transport, and making things disappear - all through mathematics. In this way he shows off his magic staff, thoroughly impressing Milo, Tock and the Humbug.

Milo asks to see the biggest number there ever was, and the Mathemagician obligingly shows him a massive three, mined by four of the strongest miners. Milo objects, saying he meant the *longest* number. To this the Mathemagician replies with a long eight, almost as wide as the three was high. Milo is still not happy, and protests that this is not what he wanted.

Tock helpfully explains that Milo is looking for the number of greatest possible magnitude. The Mathemagician is once again happy to assist - first asking Milo to say the biggest number he can think of, and then requesting he add one to it, and add one to that, and to that, and so forth. He proves that you can never have the biggest number, because you will always be able to add one. He makes the same point with the smallest number, asking them to divide their numbers in half, and in half again, and in half again and so on until infinity.

The Mathemagician says that they keep in it in infinitesimally small box, which is tied to a length of ribbon - they find the ribbon at the windowsill, but it stretches off into the distance and the end is not in sight. He says if they want to find it they must follow the string forever and ever, which Milo is reluctant to commit to. He instead

asks for a quicker way, at which point he is directed towards a flight of stairs. He bids his friends goodbye, saying he'll be back swiftly. Then he sets off up the stairs, and the chapter ends.

Analysis:

In this chapter we learn a lot more about the character of the Mathemagician - he is shown to be helpful, inquisitive and not at all malevolent - despite his brother, ruler of Dictionopolis, trying so hard to prove otherwise. Already the audience begins to notice the lies that are told, and the uselessness of the rivalry between the two cities. This is emphasised by the hospitable treatment of Milo and Tock at both places. Even the Humbug, a resident of Dictionopolis, is treated well in Digitopolis, once more highlighting the pointlessness of the feud.

It also continues to explore ideas about maths and logic - combatting traditional ideas about numbers by making these abstract concepts physical things. This is a recurring theme in the book - an exploration of numbers, letters and emotions through characters and objects. It also explains quite complex ideas about infinity, and includes some difficult equations simplified into a literary context. This chapter explains numbers in an interesting and understandable way - whilst also portraying deeper themes about misconception and conflict.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What happens when you eat division soup?
2. What types of things can the Mathemagician do with his magic staff.
3. What number is the biggest number there ever was?
4. What number is the longest number there ever was?
5. What is the number of the greatest possible magnitude?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 16:

Summary by Anouk

Milo gives up on his trip to Infinity after meeting 'half a child' and returns to the Mathemagician's workshop, where he tries to talk with the Mathemagician about Rhyme and Reason. When Milo tells him that Azaz has agreed to release the princesses, the Mathemagician refuses as he and Azaz always disagree. The Mathemagician tells Milo that if he can prove that he and Azaz have ever agreed, he will allow the release of the princesses. Milo points out that if the Mathemagician and Azaz always disagree then they have 'agreed to disagree'. After considering this, the Mathemagician accepts defeat.

The Mathemagician tells the travellers that finding the Princesses is a dangerous journey and that there is something that he can only tell them once they come back which foreshadows something dangerous is about to happen. Milo is gifted a small magic pencil similar to the Mathemagician just before they make their way to the mountains of ignorance to help him remember his lessons.

As they continue on their journey, they eventually meet the wordsnatcher who is introduced as a nuisance rather than a demon. He says that his purpose is to take words away from other people and twist them. Milo talks with the word snatcher for a short amount of time before continuing on their journey. They find 'a very elegant looking gentleman' who had no features on his face but doesn't appear to be a demon. The man, whose name we don't learn in the chapter, gives each of them a task. Milo is instructed to move a pile of sand one grain at a time, Tock should drain a well using an eye dropper and the Humbug should dig a hole through a mountain using a needle which are all tasks that appear to be unimportant. Hours pass by and they don't make much progress but as they do these supposedly irrelevant tasks 'the elegantly dressed man' stands there and watches them.

Analysis:

In the beginning of the chapter Milo meets 'half a child' which is used to show how maths can be applied to real life and that it can be useful. After tricking the Mathemagician into letting him release the princesses, Milo is gifted a mini staff to show the lesson that he has learnt from the lands beyond. The Wordsnatcher is used to show the importance of words and how they can be twisted and used against you. This is also why he is described as a 'nuisance' as it is impractical. The Wordsnatcher refers to a place called context and says he doesn't like it there, showing how twisting words is done by taking them out of context which is illustrated through the use of the bird. Puns are also used by the Wordsnatcher to make

himself seem more intelligent. The faceless gentleman doesn't appear to be a demon at first but the tasks that he gives Milo, Tock and the Humbug foreshadow that he is planning something as they appear to be unimportant and time consuming. The repetition used at the end of the chapter is used to portray a long period of time and illustrate how tedious the tasks are. Juster uses this technique to highlight the boredom and repetition of the amount of time passing by and the simple jobs the characters have to do.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What does the wordsnatcher do?
2. What are the three time-wasting tasks that the group have to do?
3. Have you ever done something like these timewasting tasks?
Watching TV for hours, for example.

Write a list of time-wasting activities that you could do.

4. Why do you think we often do time-wasting activities? Why is it a bad thing?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 17: Unwelcoming Committee

Summary by Alfie

Milo, Tock and the Humbug work on a project for what seems to be a man but grows suspicious about how long the work is supposed to take. With the help of the wand he got from the Mathemagician, he works out that it would take 837 years to finish the tasks. Milo goes and talks to the man who set them the task and finds his name is the Terrible Trivium. The Terrible Trivium describes himself as the “demon of petty tasks and worthless jobs, ogre of wasted efforts, monster of habit”.

Milo, Tock and the Humbug then run from the Terrible Trivium. They are unaware that they are being tricked so they blindly follow the advice of the Demon of Insincerity. After following this advice, they fall into a pit of what seems to be a similar texture to peanut butter and are introduced to their trickster who gives himself a brief introduction as “the long-nosed, green-eyed, curly-haired, wide-mouthed, thick-necked, broad-shouldered, round-bodied, short-armed, bowlegged, big-footed Monster—or simply the Demon of Insincerity.”

Tock and the Humbug are both very scared by the demon after he says he is one of the most “frightening **fiends** in this whole wilderness”. But then, Milo pulls out the gift he got from Alec Bings (a magic telescope) and looks at the demon through it and finds he is only a tiny animal and the demon, realising that he has been seen, walks away in defeat while Milo and his friends escape.

A fiend is an evil spirit or demon.

They continue to walk along the path but find themselves in the hands of the Gelatinous Giant though they don't realise it until he announces himself. The giant is a master of camouflage. Soon they begin a conversation where the giant reveals he is afraid of everything. In order to escape, Milo then threatens the giant with the box of ideas King Azaz gave him and the giant, too afraid to do anything else, sets them down.

As soon as they are let down the giant goes to tell the rest of the fiends what has happened. Milo, Tock and the Humbug quickly return to their journey weary of the monsters following them.

Analysis:

We can see this chapter is full of twists and turns and wherever Milo and his friends go, something is always not what it seems. From that, we find that the moral and lesson of this chapter is that not everyone is who they say they are. Milo and his friends encounter a number of Demons and Fiends who they have to overcome. Milo

strategically overcomes these challenges with gifts and knowledge he has received from other characters in the novel. This could be Norton Justers telling us as the readers that to overcome challenges you have to use knowledge that you have gained overtime.

The Terrible Trivium a faceless demon who seems genuine at first but we quickly find out is the opposite. The Terrible Trivium sets the group tasks that will take nearly 1000years to complete and after blindly following for a few days the demon thinks he has gotten the better of them. But previously Milo learnt about boredom and time so decides to calculate how long it would take them to do the task. We can see here that Milo didn't just blindly trust whatever he was told and was reflective of what was going on which helped him stop the Trivium and free himself and his friends from an eternity of tasks. We know that old Milo would have not questioned what he was doing and just continued to do it for however long it took. It also shows us the progression of Milos character after learning and consolidating many lessons he learnt while on his adventure.

This plot of blindly following, uncovering and escaping is repeated with the Demon of Insincerity but this time Milo uses a telescope from Alec Bings who we know is an adult. The use of perspectives which he learned from an adult could show how Milo has matured in facing problems and become more resilient during the course of his journeys.

Finally, Milo faces the Gelatinous Giant who hates the idea of ideas and anything that isn't normal or routine for him. Milo shocks the Giant with the gift he received from King Azaz which is a box of ideas. The giant who physically is strong and scary has no mental strength which Milo does have which is how he is defeated. Chapter 17 is used to show how Milo has more knowledge and is stronger than he was at the beginning of the book.

Comprehension Questions:

1. How did Milo work out how long the tasks would take?
2. Who misleads the group and tells them to go the wrong way?
3. How does the telescope (the gift from Alec Bings) help Milo get passed the demon?
4. How does Milo use the box of words to defeat a demon?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 18: Castle in the Air

Summary by Rita

The 'Castle in the Air' begins with our protagonist, Milo and companions Tock and the Humbug, ascending the silent, crumbling cliffs, in desperate search for the castle, and anticipating trepidation of the demons following below. Once it was in their sights, a small, round figure appears, sat ahead of them, to which Tock advises Milo to stay cautious. He introduces himself as the Senses Taker and before he can take their senses, swarms Milo, Humbug, and Tock with an abundance of trivial questions, form after form, query after query, and minute after minute, as the demons, slowly but surely, lurch forward. Frantically, they attempt to proceed, but the Senses Taker begins to advance his offers on our helpless victims. Suddenly, they're enchanted by a myriad of senses, sounds, sights, smells that entice and excite our heroes, oblivious to the time they're wasting, or the perils that come with doing so.

Milo is engrossed in a circus on the horizon, the rows on rows of tents and sideshows dancing jovially in his sights, Tock finds himself lost in exotic, wonderful smells, which enchant and delight his curious nose, and the Humbug is greeted with a riveting applause to which his main interest became the loud ovation. Lost in their euphoria, the demons edge closer, to the point all hopes would be lost in less than a minute, yet just then, from his bag of gifts, spilled off his shoulder, erupts a round of laughter from the package of sounds, encapsulating the crew in a jovial laugh. The spell was broken, but the stakes weren't. Realising they've been tricked they rush up the corkscrew staircase, narrowly avoiding the jaws of the creatures who stared with murderous lust as our protagonists raced into the clouds, guiding each other through the gales and fog till a warm sunlight greeted them at the opening of the gates.

Sweet Rhyme, and Pure Reason, the beautiful princesses who motivated their quest meet them with comforting eyes as the exhausted heroes collapse in their castle. Ashamed for the time took to complete their journey, Milo admits his faults, claiming they would've been much more efficient if he hadn't made so many mistakes, yet he's comforted that, in spite of his mistakes, they still found the princesses. He realises that mistakes are no reason for shame as long as you learn from them; that every bit of knowledge has a purpose, even if not initially visible and one day, all the places you wish to visit, and all the knowledge you wish to acquire, will all be made possible with what you learn today.

Before he could ask another question, they feel a violent shift, as the castle loses balance and begins to float, the monsters having sawed and hammered the staircase down, yet they all descend the mountain on Tock, into the darkness and creatures of the night, under the knowledge that 'time flies'.

Analysis:

This chapter beautifully illustrates the underlying themes of knowledge and education. Juster uses this to reflect Milo's adapted mindset, and the conventional, everyday appreciation and use of learning. Juster initially presents this in their encounter with the Senses Taker, the last opposition to Milo's quest to the Castle in the Air. Milo escapes this antagonist with his sense of humour, the one sense the Sense Taker couldn't take away. Juster utilises the highly personalised sense of humour, to reflect the power of Milo's individualisation and perspective, juxtaposing his apathetic, monotonous presentation at the start of the novel. This is particularly symbolised in the creative representation of the bag of sounds.

Once reaching the castle, he meets the princesses of Rhyme and Reason, who deliver the resolution to Milo's quest, and the significance of it. Through the trek throughout the Mountains of Ignorance, Milo puts the lessons learnt through his journey and discovery in the lands beyond into use. This is reflected in the use of his gifts to overcome his faults. This concludes in the introduction of the princesses, allegorically the representation of wisdom, symbolising a turn of mentality for Milo, as the slow drag of time in the opening chapter, is contradictory, both metaphorically and physically, with the phrase 'time flies'.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What are the 5 physical senses?
2. What is "common sense"?
3. What sense can the senses taker NOT take from Milo?
4. What important lesson does Milo learn when he is in the Castle in the Air?
5. How do the team get down from the Castle in the Air?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 19:

Summary by Ash

Tock flies down from the Castle in the Air, carrying Milo, the Humbug, and the princesses on his back, and lands with a jolt. As the army of demons spots them and follows them down the Mountains of Ignorance, the gang quickly starts fleeing. Milo takes a look behind him and sees a terrifying horde of monsters closing in on them. Just when the demons have caught up and are about to pounce, they mysteriously come to a halt. Milo glances up to see the soldiers of Wisdom riding towards them, led by King Azaz and the Mathmagician. The demons flee and return to the dark places from which they emerged.

Milo meets all of the people he encountered on his adventure through the Lands Beyond, and they all show up to celebrate him discovering Rhyme and Reason. Milo ultimately learns the "truth" that King Azaz warned him about back in Dictionopolis: the mission to save Rhyme and Reason was impossible. "So many things are feasible," the monarch adds, "just as long as you don't know they're impossible."

After Milo and his companions have had a wonderful celebration, the princesses tell Milo that it is time for him to return to his house. He bids farewell to everyone he's met in the Lands Beyond, including his friends Tock and the Humbug, and then drives his electric car down the highway.

Analysis:

This chapter brings the story full circle. Milo – with the help of his new friends, the Armies of Wisdom, Azaz and The Mathmagician – finally understands the importance and value of education. He finally finds joy in learning and, unlike in the beginning of the Phantom Tollbooth, he is no longer bored and apathetic. Milo's character has matured to the point where he is ready to return home with a fresh perspective on life.

Azaz and The Mathmagician also grow as characters; they welcome back Rhyme and Reason and realise that Maths and English are of equal importance. Rhyme and Reason (who represent wisdom) were unable to defend against the Demons of Ignorance. The Mathmagician and Azaz were the only ones who were able to defeat the demons because they characterise the two main aspects of education. This demonstrates how wisdom is useless without education, and education without wisdom is just as senseless.

Comprehension Questions:

The last lesson that Milo learns is that anything is possible, as long as you believe it is possible.

Why is it important that something is possible?

What happens when you **think** you can't do something?

Have you ever done something that you thought you couldn't do? For example, learnt to ride a bike, scored a goal, or got a good result in a test.

Write about a time when you did something that you thought you couldn't. How did you feel before you did it? How did you feel afterwards? What did you learn from this experience?

The Phantom Tollbooth

By Norton Juster

Chapter 20: Goodbye and Hello

Summary by Mujtaba

As Milo drives home, he realizes he's been gone for weeks. He hopes no one is worried. After a long time, the tollbooth comes into view. Milo drops his coin into the slot and suddenly finds himself sitting in his bedroom—and it's only six in the evening! He's only been gone an hour. Milo had no idea he could get so much done in such a short time. He's exhausted, so he goes to bed right after dinner.

After school the next day, Milo plans to go back to the Lands Beyond—but when he gets home, the tollbooth is gone. Instead, there's an envelope addressed, "FOR MILO, WHO NOW KNOWS THE WAY." Inside, the note hopes that Milo was satisfied with his trip, but that they had to collect the tollbooth and send it to another boy or girl. If he wants to see other lands on the map, he should be able to figure out how to get there himself. The signature is unreadable.

Milo is so excited to go back through the tollbooth because it was such a novel and eye-opening experience for him. At this point, he believes that using the tollbooth is the only way to access the Lands Beyond (and indeed, his imagination). But the note suggests that Milo doesn't actually need the tollbooth—he can use his imagination and go anywhere he likes.

Sad, Milo curls up in his armchair. He thinks of Tock and the Humbug, Rhyme and Reason, and his other friends. But though he's sad, he also notices how pretty the sky and trees are. He can take walks, find caterpillars, and smell each day. In his room there are books to read, things to build and invent, and songs to sing. Eagerly, Milo rushes around his room, ready to try something new. He decides he doesn't have time to make another trip with so much to do here.

Analysis:

This is the first time that Milo has even acknowledged that he has people at home who care about him. His time away has seemingly taught him to care more about those people. He's also learned that by using his imagination, he can travel anywhere he likes—and still be home for dinner. In addition, he's learned the value of using his time efficiently and productively rather than wasting it. He has learnt to be careful with words, the importance and usefulness of numbers and so much more. Now, back in his bedroom, he understands that the world isn't as boring as he thought; that there is a lot to learn and discover, just like his adventures in the Land Beyond.

The Tollbooth acts as a gateway for Milo to access his imagination. The moment he decides to participate, by putting the coin through the slot, he is transported to another world. This book, and all books in fact, do the same thing. As soon as you decide to open a book, you

are getting ready to explore a totally new world, with all of the adventures, friends and lessons that come with it.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Milo thinks that he has been in the Land Beyond for weeks when, in reality, it has only been an hour. Can you think of another time where we experience an imaginary adventure but it only lasts for a couple of minutes?
2. Have you ever read a book that you haven't been able to put down? What was it and why did you like it?
3. If you were Milo, what kind of world would you like to visit next? A Land of Luxury? A Land of Mythical Creatures? A Land of Unfinished Business?

Design a Land for Milo to visit. Suggest things that might happen to him while he is in this land. What will he learn while he is there?

You can write your answer in bullet points, as a story or even a newspaper article.