

Secrets of the Seven The Eureka Key

This guide is aligned with the following Common Core Standards for 5th grade. If you teach another grade you will want to visit the [Common Core website](#) and find the coordinating standards for your students.

Reading Literature Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4.b

Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *photograph*, *photosynthesis*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4.c

Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

Pre-reading Activity: What do you think?

Mark the opinion which most closely matches how you feel about the statements below. Then, discuss the answers and ranking as a class. To make the discussion more interactive hang the four opinions in each corner of the room and allow students to move between them, revealing their opinion without even speaking!

Statement:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	WHY I think this:
It's important to have a great villain in any story.					
Two minds (or three) is always better than one.					
Puzzles are awesome.					
To become real friends you have to be very similar.					
The real history of America is just a series of inventions.					

Vocabulary:

Chapter:	Vocabulary:
Prologue (letter)	Prosperity, kin, vessel, bestowed, realm,
1	Envisioned, linoleum
2	Inherited, injustice, multifaceted, astonishing,
3	Obnoxious, stark, periodically, debuted, skewered, withering, accommodations, flourish, analytical, preferential, aeronautics,
4	Eerily, adrenaline, gesticulating, tarmac, anticipated, sultry, itinerary, bristling, extraterrestrial, labyrinth, conglomerates, borax, undulating, petroglyphs, exertion, brandished, demeanor,
5	Ravine, trudging, mirage, ventured, rivulets, delirious, gnomon, sundial
6	Pristine, plateau, crestfallen, expendable, sadistic, presumably,
7	Associates, insignificant, nondescript, prospector, ominous
8	Lurch, inscription, murk, abyss, intrigued,
9	Temples, physiology, equipped, illuminated, ashen, remote, descendant,
10	Armonica, notation, smithereens, stifling, temperance, frugality, sincerity, tranquility, surging
11	Astonishment, filaments, curt, flautist, aristocrats,
12	Seized, inlaid, tawny, immaculate,
13	Sweltered, haul, comply, wielding, illustrious, askew, persuasion, distress,

	careening,
14	Eternity, baffled, insistent, hazily, portico, prevail, treachery, bungle, ancestral, parkas,

Vocabulary project:

Resident expert: Choose a dozen of the words from the novel to study. Then, choose at least three of the following projects to complete based on those words:

<p>Index Cards: Create a set of flashcards that have the following information on them: a definition in your own words, synonyms/antonyms, a sentence that shows the meaning.</p>	<p>Word Find: Create a word-find puzzle using all fifteen words. It should not just list the words but offer clues should help the player learn the definitions. Provide an answer key.</p>	<p>Root Words: Identify the various parts of the words: root words, prefixes and suffixes and analyze and annotate the meaning of those word parts.</p>
<p>Etymologies: Research the original language that these words first appeared. Describe any changes in its meaning over time and through various languages.</p>	<p>Art: Draw or create a picture that will help you remember the meaning of the word. Be sure to use color! Explain the meaning if necessary.</p>	<p>Acrostics: Create an acrostic that proves you understand the meaning of the words by using them in context.</p>

Questions for comprehension & discussion:

Prologue (letter)

Who is Richard? Briefly summarize Ben Franklin’s letter.

Why do you think the author included it?

Ch. 1

What does the reader understand about Sam’s character by the end of chapter one?

Explain why you would (or would not) want Sam as a friend.

Ch. 2

Describe the basics of the “American Dream Contest” and how Sam and his mother react to his winning.

Why is it important to the story?

Ch. 3

Evangeline, Martina and Theo are introduced in this chapter. Describe the first impression of each character in three words or less. Then, create a triple Venn diagram to compare and contrast them.

Explain the mysterious and suspicious behavior surrounding the American Dream contest. How has this increased the conflict in the story?

Ch. 4

How do Martina and Sam complement each other? If Martina wasn't there, how do you think the plane incident would have ended? Why?

Which character are you most similar: Sam, Martina, Theo or Evangeline? Why?

Did you expect the tourist (Aloha-Shirt Guy) to be a threat? What clues may have led you to believe so?

Ch. 5

How does each character respond to the danger presented to them by Aloha-Shirt Guy?

How would you have reacted? Is it important to have a villain in a story? Why or why not? What makes a great villain?

Ch. 6

Explain the concept of the sundial puzzle, and how it went wrong.

What were the ramifications? What's the biggest mistake you've ever made? Do we learn more from our mistakes or our successes? What makes you think so?

Ch. 7

Summarize each character's role in escaping from the clutches of Flintlock after they first enter the cave.

How does Theo respond to Sam's questioning? How would you?

Ch. 8

What does Sam have to do in order to save himself and his friends from the water? Why does he need both history and puzzle-solving skills to do so?

Describe the rules for "Magic Square of Squares."

Summarize what Theo explains to Martina and Sam about the trip. Who are the seven historical founders? What are they trying to protect? Why?

Ch. 9

Explain a few of the traps amongst the puzzles. Why were they put there? What do the puzzles add to the story? Why do you think the author included them?

What is the true purpose of the American Dream Contest? Why does Evangeline need their help?

Ch. 10

List Ben Franklin's virtues to live by (only 12 appear in this chapter, the 13th is in chapter 11). Rank them in order of importance to you and be prepared to defend your choices.

Ch. 11

Explain how and why Martina sacrificed herself. What does she learn in doing so?
 What is the Eureka Key? Why does Sam agree to stay and help find it rather than escaping immediately?
 Analyze the method Sam and Martina use to determine which key was correct.
 Based solely on the information in the text, what is your opinion of Ben Franklin's character? Why?

Ch. 12

How does Sam use logic and puzzle solving skills to keep Flintlock from shooting?
 Describe the first impression of Arnold. How does he differ from Flintlock?

Ch. 13.

Who was Benedict Arnold and why does it make sense that Gideon Arnold is his descendant?
 To whom is Theo related? What about Evangeline? Why is this important and what does it potentially show about their characters? How important do you think being a descendent is on people's personality? Why?

Ch. 14

Summarize the gang's escape from Scotty's castle.
 Why does Evangeline compare Sam, Theo and Martina's victory to the American's victory against the British?
 Explain how Sam has changed by then end of the novel. What has he learned about himself?
 Where are the kids off to next? How did they figure it out?

Project:

Research: American history is an obvious important element to the novel. Research one of these topics from a reliable and valid source. Then, create a pamphlet or poster (or better yet a website or online poster like glogster) to share what you learned. Don't forget to cite your sources! Use a variety of methods of gathering information: key quotes, paraphrases, and summaries.

Research methods:

Direct quotation:	Cite an exact sentence inside quotation marks that perfectly explains an aspect of your topic. Be sure to cite the source accurately and no more than 10% of your whole piece can be inside quotation marks (it's your paper after all!)
Paraphrase:	Take notes from a reliable source. Then, restate the information in your OWN, ORIGINAL words. Never use more than three words in a row from the original material. You still need to cite your source here, too.
Summary:	Explain the gist or the big ideas discussed in the article.

Possible Topics:

Benjamin Franklin

Discovery of electricity

The U.S. Constitution

“Join or Die” from the American Revolution

Yorktown

Yankee Doodle

Scotty’s Castle

Magic Squares

What are magic squares and who invented them? How do they play a part in the novel? Can you solve a smaller version of the game below?

2	7	6
9		1
4	3	8

CHALLENGE: Try to create a magic square of your own:

[Tracie Vaughn](#), author and English teacher, created this guide.