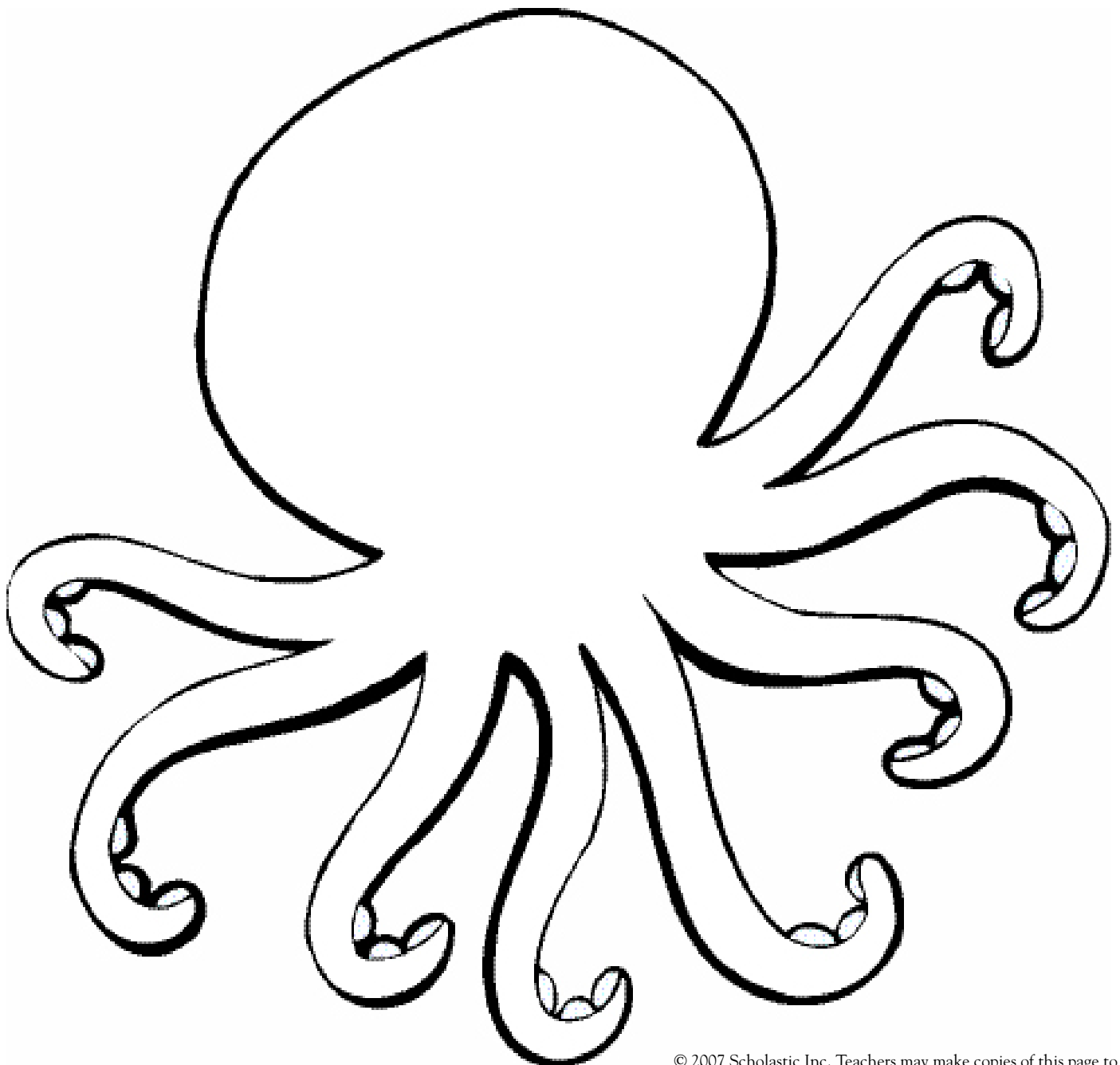


Octopus Parts

Maxine Kumin's poem "Octopus" vividly describes one of nature's most fascinating creatures. Using the poem as a guide, label the parts of this octopus, drawing in additional parts and adding color as you see fit. If you like, do further research to really make your drawing come to life. (Just make sure it doesn't grab one of your friends!)

Directions: Label the different parts and add color according to the poem and your own research.



The Poem Zoo

Some poems aren't just beautiful to read, they are filled with facts. In this activity, you will research an animal that inspires you and then write a poem based on what you've learned.

Directions: Think of an animal to research (check out www.bbc.co.uk/nature/reallywild).

In section one, fill in the facts about your animal, and add interesting ideas of your own.

In section two, think of adjectives and beautifully descriptive phrases for each fact you found.

Finally, write a poem about your animal inspired by "Octopus," by Maxim Kumin.

Section 1: Facts about your favorite animal

1. What my animal looks like _____
2. Where my animal lives _____
3. What my animal eats _____
4. How my animal moves _____
5. Something unique about my animal _____

Section 2: Poetic words and phrases that describe your animal

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Section 3: On a separate piece of paper, write a poem about your animal.

A Poem Is a Ray of Sunshine.

The sentence above is a metaphor—a statement in which an author describes something by calling it something else. You're probably using metaphors without knowing it—like when your little brother throws his dirty sock at you, and you say, "You're a monster!" You don't mean that he has green skin and claws. You are comparing him to something monstrous to make your point.

This activity will help you become a metaphor pro.

Directions: For each item listed below, think of a metaphor that will help you describe it in a new and interesting way.

1. My family is my rock.
2. This ice cream is _____
3. School is _____
4. I am _____

**Now, explain how each metaphor works.
What does the comparison tell you about the original object?**

1. You love your family and know they are always there for you.
They are solid and never budge, like a rock.
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

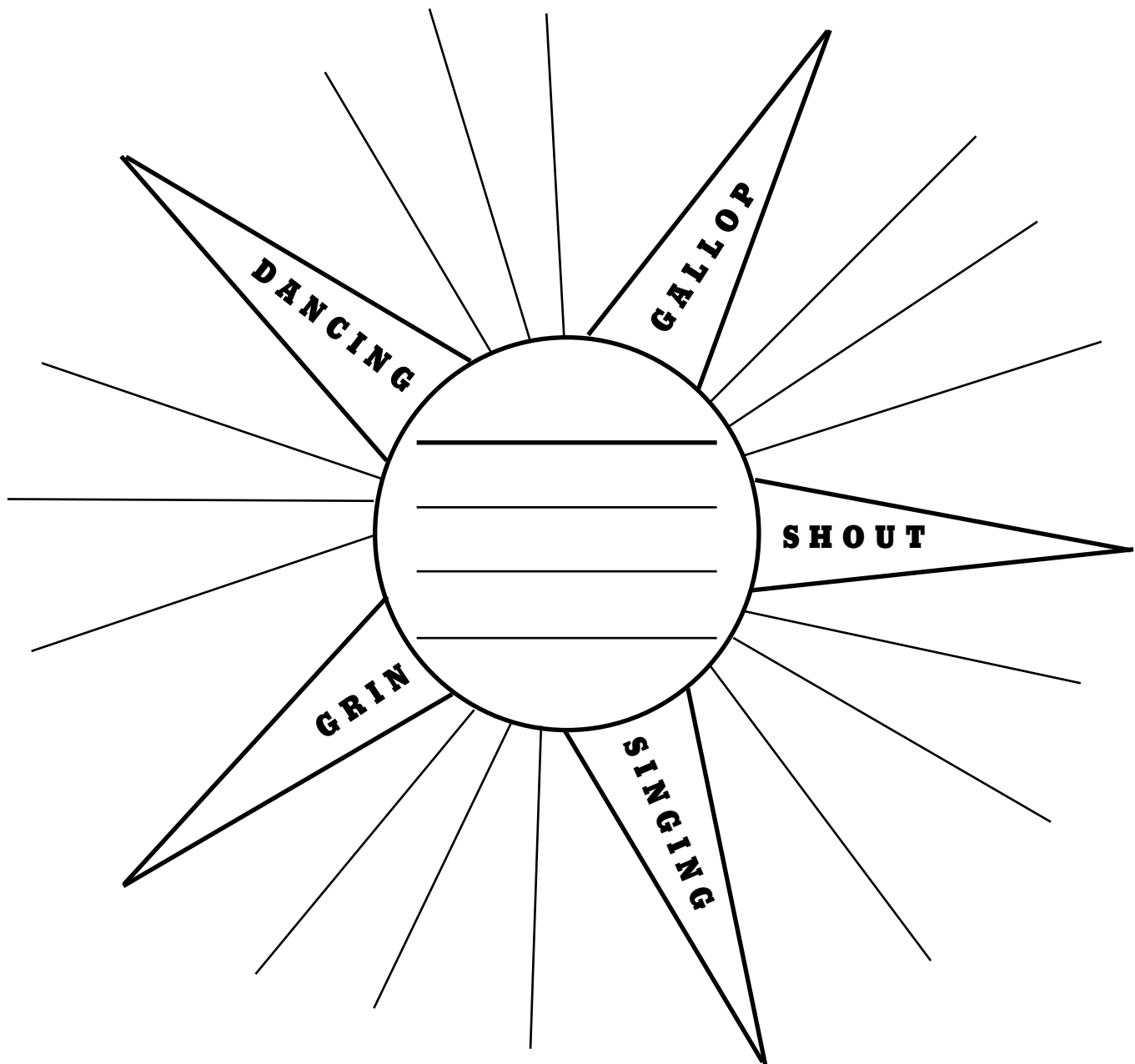
Write Now!

Pick your favorite metaphor from your list above and write a short poem about it, using "A Circle of Sun" as a model. Use a separate piece of paper.

A Burst of Vocabulary

Giggle, grin, gallop. Rebecca Kai Dotlich's exuberant poem soars because of the fun and interesting words she uses. You will recognize them, but you might not use energetic words like them very often. In this activity, you will find fun synonyms for words in the poem.

Directions: For each of the words in the sunburst below, write down three synonyms, or words that mean the same thing, on the sun's rays. Then, choose another favorite word from the poem and find three synonyms to write inside the sun. Try this on your own, but if you get stumped, you can use a thesaurus.



Now Why'd He Do That?

Colonel Patterson wasn't planning to hunt man-eating lions when he went to Africa. But after the dangerous beasts appeared, he had to make some scary decisions. Why did he make the choices he did? Understanding why a character, or real-life figure, thinks or acts the way he does can help you understand the story better. In this activity, you will consider some of Colonel Patterson's thoughts and actions and find explanations, or "motivations," for each one in the article.

Directions: In the left-hand column, write down Colonel Patterson's thoughts or actions (we did the first one for you!). In the right-hand column, write down what caused each thought or action.

WHAT COLONEL PATTERSON DID

1. Colonel Patterson traveled to Kenya.

2.

3.

4.

WHY HE DID IT

1.

2.

3.

4.

Fact or Opinion?

The Uganda Railroad stretched 500 miles. The jungle it cut through was too scary and dangerous. One of those sentences is a fact, something that can be proved. The other is an opinion, an expression of an individual's thoughts or beliefs. But how do you tell the difference? Ask yourself, which one can you measure, test, or otherwise prove? That's the fact. And which one might sound different depending who says it? That one is an opinion.

Directions: Circle **F** for fact or **O** for opinion on the railroad tie by each statement below.

1. The Tsavo Forest is in present-day Kenya.

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F | O | F | O |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|

6. Mombasa was a beautiful, dazzling city.

2. The lions lacked their natural prey due to drought and disease.

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F | O | F | O |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|

7. Inghan Singh's tentmates witnessed the lions attack on him.

3. No one would want to work in the snake-infested jungle where the railroad workers cut a path.

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F | O | F | O |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|

8. The lions acted like devils.

4. Over nine months, two lions killed 135 men.

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F | O | F | O |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|

9. The lions are now on display at the Field Museum in Chicago.

5. Colonel Patterson did the right thing by shooting the lions.

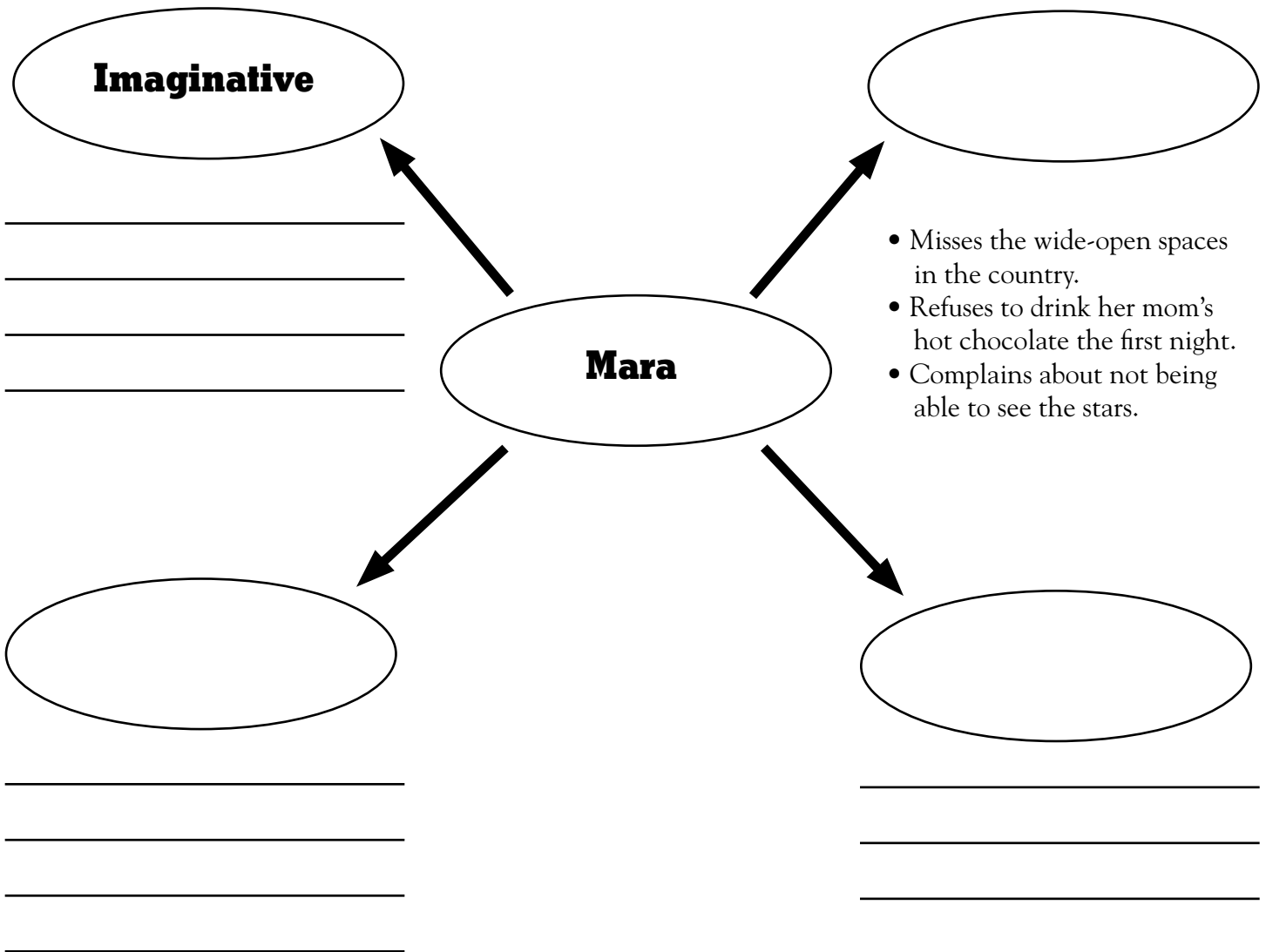
| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F | O | F | O |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|

10. Humans suffered more than lions in the events of 1898.

I Can Prove It!

Part of what makes "The Stars Below Me" such an interesting and engaging story is its main character, Mara. In this activity, you'll think of adjectives that describe Mara and then, for each adjective, find details that demonstrate why you would describe her that way.

Directions: In each bubble, write a word or a phrase to describe her character. Then, below each bubble, list examples from the story that show Mara exhibiting this trait. We've gotten you started!



Write Now!

Now, take out a separate piece of paper. Using one of the bubbles you completed above, write a short paragraph describing Mara. Remember to include supporting details to make her character come alive!

Time and Place

What is the setting of a story? It's where and when the story takes place: a town or a city; last month or 500 years ago; in America or in a land of fantasy. This activity will help you learn to pay close attention to the setting of the stories and novels you read, and to appreciate how a setting can affect practically everything in a story.

Directions: Answer the questions below.

| Where? | When? |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Where does this story take place?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>4. When does the story take place?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
| <p>2. Is it a big city or a small town?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>5. How do you know this?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
| <p>3. How do you know? (Give examples from the story.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>6. What language does the author, Wendy Mass, use to convey this fact?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |

Write Now!

Could this story have happened 100 years ago? What details would have had to change? Write a well-organized paragraph explaining your answer, using details from the story and your own ideas.

The Stars Above You

Part of the fun of reading fiction is thinking to yourself, "Why do I find the objects in the story interesting? How do they make me feel?" In this activity, you will compare your thoughts and feelings about stars with how they were portrayed in the story "The Stars Below Me."

Directions: Write down a list of words or phrases to answer the question in each star below.

What do stars look like?

**What do stars do?
(hint: twinkle, shine)**

STARS

How does stargazing make you feel?

How did reading about Eta and Mara's friendship make you feel?

Write Now!

Do you like stargazing as much as Mara does? On a separate piece of paper, write a paragraph answering this question and base it on what you wrote above. Use examples from your life and from the story.

Five and Five

In this activity, you will compare and contrast Frank Duryea and Kasey Kahne from this month's "Yesterday & Today" feature.

Directions: In the box on the left, write five facts about Frank Duryea from the "Yesterday & Today" article. In the box on the right, write five facts about Kasey Kahne.

| Facts | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Frank Duryea | Kasey Kahne |
| 1. _____ _____ | 1. _____ _____ |
| 2. _____ _____ | 2. _____ _____ |
| 3. _____ _____ | 3. _____ _____ |
| 4. _____ _____ | 4. _____ _____ |
| 5. _____ _____ | 5. _____ _____ |

Write Now!

Use your list to write a well-organized paragraph in which you compare and contrast race-car drivers Frank Duryea and Kasey Kahne. (Use a separate piece of paper.)

Big Ideas

A main idea is what a story is really about—the fight between good and evil, for example, or a character who wants to grow and change in some way. Usually there are two or three main ideas in a story, and there are always details that give you clues about what the main ideas are.

In this activity, you will figure out the main ideas of the play *The Dark is Rising* and find the “supporting” details for each one.

Directions: Read each main idea below. Then, in the boxes below them, list three details from the play that support each idea. You will need to keep the play handy and refer to it throughout the activity. Be specific! We got you started.

MAIN IDEA

The Light and the Dark are locked in an ongoing struggle.

SUPPORTING DETAIL 1

Merriman and Miss Greythorne tell Will that “the dark is rising.”

SUPPORTING DETAIL 2

SUPPORTING DETAIL 3

Continued ►►

MAIN IDEA

The Rider wants to stop Will.

SUPPORTING DETAIL 1

SUPPORTING DETAIL 2

SUPPORTING DETAIL 3

Continued ►►

MAIN IDEA

Will has a lot to learn about the strange events happening around him.

SUPPORTING DETAIL 1

SUPPORTING DETAIL 2

SUPPORTING DETAIL 3

Name: _____ Date: _____

A Sign of What's to Come

A church filled with snakes! What will happen next? At the end of a suspenseful play like *The Dark is Rising*, and throughout any story or book, you should continue to ask that question. Making a prediction, or imagining the answer to "what happens next?" is an important part of being a good reader. You can find clues in the story, the pictures, the captions, everywhere!

Directions: Follow the prompts in each box to write your predictions about *The Dark is Rising*.

Will The Walker steal from Will?

Why did you think that? (What were your clues?)

What will happen to Will, Merriman and Miss Greythorne inside the snake-filled church?

Why did you think that? (What were your clues?)

Do you think Will will ever give the Sign to the Rider?

Why did you think that? (What were your clues?)

Will the Old Ones prevent the Dark from rising?

Why did you think that? (What were your clues?)

Write Now!

Why is it important to make predictions when you're reading a story or a book?
How does this help you become a better reader? Write your answer in a well-organized paragraph.

The Elements of Fantasy

***The Dark is Rising* is a work of fantasy. But what does that mean? Fantasy is a genre, the word for a category of books with similar features, stories, or characters. While books and movies in the fantasy genre have lots of differences, some elements often reappear and help us to identify the type of story we're following. In this activity, you will find examples of four elements of the fantasy genre from the play version of *The Dark is Rising*.**

Directions: Read *The Dark is Rising* and fill in the boxes with examples from the play of each of the elements of fantasy listed below.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Characters have special powers.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>3. There is a fight between Good and Evil.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p>2. Objects have special powers.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>4. The story is set in or includes episodes from a distant time period.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |