Novel Study: City of Ember

By Jeanne DuPrau
Pre-Reading Activities

1. The title of the novel is The City of Ember. An ember is a piece of coal, wood, or other material that is still glowing in the ashes of a fire. On the work web below, write a word in each circle that relates to the word ember. The compare your diagram with those of your classmates. What do you imagine the city of Ember will be like?
2. Would you want to completely live without electricity? What are some things run by electricity that you would be willing to give up? Make a list of some important devices that use electricity and state whether you would be willing to give them up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Device</th>
<th>Devices Function</th>
<th>Could you live without it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>IPod</em></td>
<td><em>Allows you to play music, take photographs, play games, communicate on Internet, etc…</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. Imagine that you can get into a time machine and travel hundreds of years into the future. What do you think you would see? Would things be better or worse that they are now. Use this chart to organize your thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will the world be like 200 years into the future?</th>
<th>Is it better or worse than today? Explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People will no longer be using vehicles powered by fossil fuels.</td>
<td>This will be better because fossil fuels cause large amounts of pollution and climate change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions and Chapters 1-4

Directions: This is group work and everyone must complete the questions below. Each group member must answer the questions on their own sheet of paper. Discuss with group members and answer in **complete sentences**.

1) Do you think it’s reasonable for the Builders to insist that the instructions remain secret for 220 years?

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2) Explain why electricity is so important in Ember.

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3) Describe the supplies and luxuries available in Ember.

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4) In what condition is the Pipeworks? How does it compare to the rest of Ember?

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5) How would you react if you were alone in the Unknown Regions?

Step 2

Directions: Each member of your group must complete a character sketch of character from chapter 1 through chapter 4. You may choose a character from this list. Each group must complete a Lina and Doon sketch.

1) On a paper provided you will have to draw the character based on information from the book. There needs to be colour and no stick people.

2) At the top of the sketch write in big, bold, letters one important quote from the novel that describes your character. Make sure to include quotation marks and the page number.

- Lina (Mandatory)
- Doon (Mandatory)
- Mayor Cole
- Granny
- Poppy
- Looper
- Clary
- Mrs. Murdo
- Sadge Merrall
Character Sketch

Character: ___________________

Quote: ________________________________________________
       ________________________________________________
       ________________________________________________
Chapters 5 - 10

Discuss with group members and answer in complete sentences.

1) What do Ember’s citizens believe about the rest of the world?
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_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

2) Why would it frighten children to see Ember’s current storerooms?
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_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

3) How do you think the City has reached its present state?
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_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Step 2

Split up each of the jobs below so that one person has their own task. Once all jobs are complete, share your work with the group.

Decoder: Attempt to decode the document on Page 94 and 95. Compare your results with other groups.

Scientist: Research about Vitamin D and why it is important. Create a poster about what it does, why the body needs it, the sources of Vitamin D, and what happens when the body does not get enough Vitamin D.
**Dietician:** Start a list of foods that are found in Ember and continue the list as you read on. Consider which foods are on the list and which are missing. Does anything surprise you? For example, why doesn’t the greenhouse grow fruits or grains? Why is there no livestock?

**Historian:** What have you learned about what life in Ember is like, and how is it different from the present? For example, students go to school until the age of 12 in Ember while most students in Canada complete high school when they are 18. Create a compare and contrast chart outlining the similarities and differences between Ember and present day society.

**Phrase/Words Specialist:** Doon reads about different words and phrases from the past that people used. Choose four phrases from the list below and learn where they came from! Make a poster with the phrases and a description of how they were created! Draw some pictures illustrating the phrase.

- Armed to the teeth
- Raining cats and dogs
- Bite the bullet
- Blood is thicker than water
- Cat got your tongue
- Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater
- Kick the bucket
Chapters 11-16

Discuss with group members and answer in complete sentences.

1) What taints Lina’s enjoyment of the peaches and creamed corn? Why?

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2) The following passage is from page 153.

“Lizzie nodded, smiling smugly, “Lopper says it’s all going to be gone soon anyway, why not live as well as we can right now?”

“But Lizzie, why should you get all that? Why you and not other people?”

“Because we found it. Because we can get at it.”

a. Do you this is representative of how people think and act in the real world? Why or why not?

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b. Do you agree with Lizzie? Why or why not?

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3) How do you think Lina feels when she realizes Ember is not the only place in the world? Why?

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4) Mayor Coles tells Lina that curiosity is a dangerous, unhealthy, and regrettable quality in a young person. Why does he say this to Lina, and what does he mean? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

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_________________________________________________________
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Step 2: Deciphering Messages

Directions: In your group complete the Writing Secret Messages packet and answer the following questions.

1) What is a cipher?

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2) What is the difference between decryption and encryption?

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_________________________________________________________

3) What is the encrypted message from part 1?

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_________________________________________________________

4) Decode the message from Part II, what does it say?

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
5) Come up with your own code and encrypt five different messages.

Chapters 17 – End

Discuss with group members and answer in complete sentences.

1) Describe the boat ride for Doon and Lina (include IMAGERY!)

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2) Do you think the citizens will find their way out of Ember? Why or Why not?

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3) Name three things Doon and Lina find once they emerged from the tunnel. Include how they described them and the common word we know it by.

   a. ________________________________________________________________
   
   b. ________________________________________________________________
   
   c. ________________________________________________________________
4) Do you think there is human life in this new world? Explain.

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________________________________________________________________________
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5) Why weren’t the first inhabitants of Ember allowed to bring books or photographs?

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6) What do you think happened on Earth that made the scientists create Ember?

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7) Does the novel come to a close or final ending? Explain.

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