

The Phantom Tollbooth Text Set

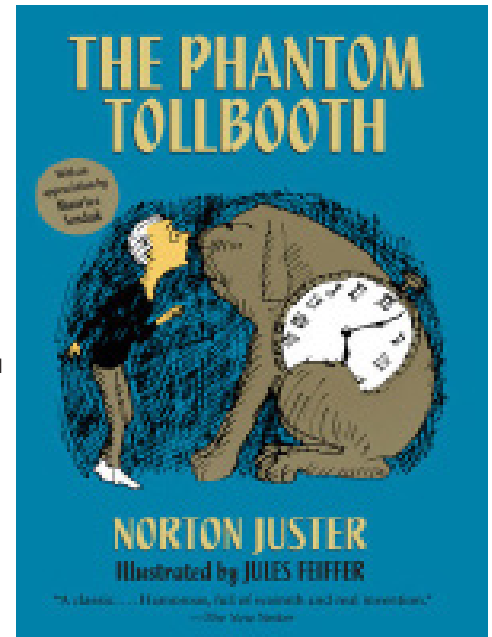
Milo finds life endlessly dull. Even when a mysterious tollbooth appears in his room, he chooses to pass its gate only because he has nothing better to do. But as he travels through the curious lands beyond the tollbooth, he has many adventures and encounters many strange creatures. In the end, he realizes that in life, there is a lot to do, and even more to learn. This text set explores the themes of learning, travel, character development, and government leaders.

Essential Questions

1. What can people learn from their experiences?
2. What makes places unique and different? How can an author make you feel like you're experiencing those places?
3. How is conflict built into a story?
4. How does an author develop a character's personality?

Informational Paired Text

These *TIME for Kids* articles can be used to discuss the themes in *The Phantom Tollbooth*.



1. **“Maker Moment”** (February 22, 2019) School makerspaces allow students to get creative and solve real-world problems.
2. **“Language Learning”** (January 18, 2019) Studies suggest that children’s brains are more adaptable than adults’ brains, making it easier for kids to learn new languages.
3. **“TFK Explains: The Government Shutdown”** (January 11, 2019) At the end of 2018, the U.S. government shutdown because lawmakers could not agree on a spending bill.
4. **“Happy Trails”** (November 9, 2018) The National Trails System is made up of paths, roads, and waterways in all 50 states.
5. **“What’s Up, Dog?”** (September 11, 2017) A dog’s brain is strikingly similar to a human’s. Dogs can recognize faces, form friendships, and be aware of passing of time.
6. **“Outdoor Adventure”** (April 15, 2016) Schools across the country are using outdoor classrooms to make learning more meaningful.

Optional Extensions

1. Activity

Print out a map of the *Phantom Tollbooth* lands (this can be found on Google). Ask the class to label each location with the lessons that Milo learned in that place. Then have students create a map of their own community and label it with lessons they’ve learned in each place. (For example, at home, they may have learned to cook, and at the park, they may have learned to play baseball.) Then have a class discussion about the following: Should there be more experiential learning opportunities at school? Have students respond with examples from the text as well as personal experiences.

2. Writing Assignment

Have students respond to the following prompt. After reading *The Phantom Tollbooth* and “TFK Explains: The Government Shutdown,” write an essay explaining how leaders’ disagreements can have an effect on many people. Students should use evidence from both sources in their answer.

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