



JOHNS HOPKINS  
CENTER *for* TALENTED YOUTH

ACTIVATE:

AWESOME!

Welcome to the CTY Online Programs  
**Young Readers' Series**

# Learn about the CTY Online Programs' Critical Reading: Young Readers' Series!



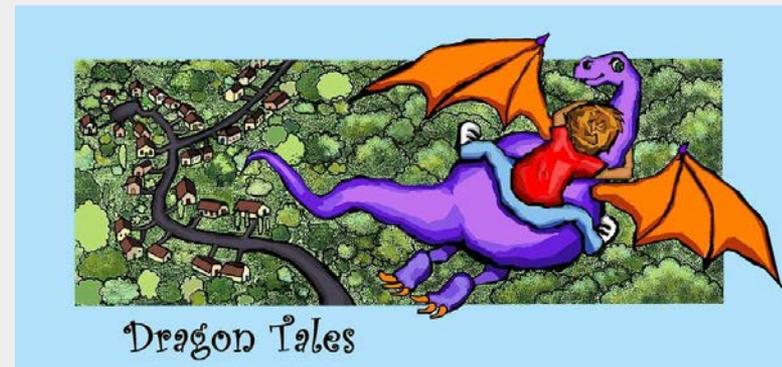
# Young Readers' Courses Meet an Important Need

- Parents and teachers often complain that many advanced readers appear to swallow books without making a serious attempt to savor them.
- In CTY's Young Readers' Series, 2nd-6th grade students focus on developing and expanding their critical reading skills rather than merely speed.



# Course Themes

- Greek Myths Revisited
- Magical Life Lessons
- Quests & Challenges
- Ancient Egypt Rediscovered
- In Search Of
- The Right Stuff (NonFiction)
- Good Dogs
- Dragon Tales
- Mystery Stories
- Wild Things
- Robot Encounters



A multitude of different topics entice young students into grappling with books by popular authors such as Rick Riordan and J.K. Rowling.

# Course Flexibility

- Course formats allow students to work at their own convenience.
- Courses are session-based and begin and end on specific dates.
- Students can post their work and read other students' discussion responses in virtual classrooms at their convenience, as long as they finish their assignments for the lesson by the weekly deadline.
- Instructors give students and parents written, individualized feedback after each lesson and a detailed final evaluation at the end of the course.

# Online Classrooms

Web-based virtual classrooms offer many resources and optional activities:

- Glossary of Literary Terms
- Online literary terms games
- Vocabulary word lists, games, and puzzles
- Wiki for students to recommend their favorite books and authors

# Student Development

Written discussions and creative writing assignments encourage students to:

- **ANALYZE** by making inferences and determining character motivations
- **EVALUATE** by comparing and contrasting points of view
- **PERSUADE** by providing textual evidence to support opinions
- **CREATE** by responding to imaginative and challenging assignments using literary devices and, in several courses, web 2.0 tools.

# Several Courses include Web 2.0 Tools

*The Right Stuff* (Grades 4-6)

*In Search Of* (Grades 4-6)

*Wild Things* (Grades 2-3)

*Robot Encounters* (Grades 2-3)

- These courses are open to both verbal and math qualifiers in the listed grades.
- They offer students the opportunity of creating multimedia content such as curated slideshows, online magazine articles, storybooks, cartoons, and flyers, using web tools and instructions described in the classroom's *Web 2.0 Tools Glossary*.
- All Web 2.0 courses include short educational videos related to the books.

# Worldwide Discussions

- Students discuss topics with CTY peers around the globe.
- Flexibility of virtual classrooms allows students all over the world to participate in the same Young Readers' course.

During each 10-lesson course, students read 3 - 4 books of increasing difficulty and engage with their instructor and classmates worldwide in written discussions about widely ranging topics:

- time travel to artificial intelligence
- wild animal conservation to canine intelligence
- the ethics of subliminal advertising to the relationship between persistence, resilience, and success

# Sample Discussion Q&A: Grades 2-3

## QUESTION from Robot Encounters: A society run by robots

- What do you think of a world in which robots complete such tasks as housework, childcare, cooking, security, operating buildings, and the driving of buses, taxis, etc.?
- What would be some of the positive aspects of such a world?
- What might be the negative aspects of such a world?
- Would you want to live in this world--or do you already? Explain.

## ANSWERS

- *From what I have read, I don't think that a society run by robots would be good. The people in a society should learn to be responsible. If robots did everything, the people would do nothing. They don't know how to be responsible. The people in a society wouldn't have jobs after the first robots were made because the robots would do everything.*
- *The good thing about this world is that the people could do anything they wanted to do while robots were working.*
- *The bad thing is that the robots could malfunction and the society would be filled with crazy and disabled robots.*
- *I would not like to live in a world with crazy and disabled robots. If that happens, nobody will be happy.*



# Sample Discussion Q&A: Grades 2-3

## QUESTION from Dragon Tales: Must dragons be exterminated?

- Do you agree with Sarryck that extermination of the dragons is the only sensible solution?
- Does his plan seem fair and just to you?
- Can you think of any alternative plan?

## ANSWERS

- *I don't think the dragons must be exterminated as it isn't the only sensible solution and it is not fair to both parties as dragons are just trying to have an easy life without having any fights and making them suffer even more makes the situation even worse. The better solution for retaining peace between both sides is to ask the dragons not to accidentally breath fire at their houses/ shelters / palaces any more.*
- *It's not fair because the dragons didn't fight of their own will. Instead, they were forced to attack because of the tempting pull of the slippers. I think Sarryck is ... being very mean to the dragons. They're just gentle but large creatures.*
- *I agree with you, J., because if all Creel's plans had failed then they might consider to kill the dragons, but that is only if all other ideas have failed. I think Sarryck made the decision too quick and should have waited until they tried to collar the dragons first. I think that Creel and Luka were very brave to volunteer to collar the dragons to save them.*
- *I agree with you, but I feel like killing is evil. Maybe instead they should trap Amalia and destroy the slippers. It would be a good punishment, but there would be no killing.*



# Sample Discussion Q&A: Grades 4-6

## QUESTION from Quests & Challenges

- Does the description of the Emergency (*Mysterious Benedict Society*) sound like the news that bombards you at school, on television, in newspapers, and over the internet? How so?
- Does listening to such news inspire you to act to make things better, or do you tend to ignore it after a while?

## ANSWERS

- *I actually think "The Emergency" is like a lot of today's events. Ever since Donald Trump has become president a lot of people are protesting and asking for change, like the citizens in The Mysterious Benedict Society, but the president can't always fix everything. There is always some different change that people want to put in place, and it is all over the media and Internet, but after a while I got used to it and I don't care as much anymore. These slogans may seem like good ideas but they'll make you wonder how will they do that, and I just tend to not listen to them because they most likely aren't going to have a big impact on the world.*
- *I agree with you that the media always exaggerates and acts dramatic. But, you said that you did not care about the emergency, and that you said not listen to them. But what if actually has a giant impact on the mission, what if they use what they know about the emergency and are able to fix it.*
- *This sounds like the real world, exactly. I don't think there really is such a thing like the Emergency, The media just exaggerates about things. They also always talk about the bad things that happened. They do this to hook the person into watching or finding out what's happening. Your brain would rather hear about a plane crash than a new neighborhood opening up near you.*



# Creative Writing Assignments

Students complete nine creative writing assignments.

## Examples:

- Newspaper and magazine articles
- Mock TED talks
- Interviews and dialogues
- Diaries and letters
- Talk shows with story characters as guests



# Sample Writing Assignments (Grades 2-3)

## Grades 2-3 Assignment from Good Dogs:

- Pretend that you are a dog who is sad or bewildered by human activities - and write a 50-250+ word doggy diary account.

## Grades 2-3 Assignment from Dragon Tales:

- Pretend that you work for the marketing department of the *Magicians Free Press* magazine and write a 50-250+ word advertisement for Clipper's Emporium, including a few imaginary but useful or attractive magical items not mentioned in the book.



# Examples of Student Responses to Grades 2-3 Writing Assignments

from Good Dogs:

*Dear diary,*

*I've always been the baby of my family, until today... My owner introduced me to a gray cat. He said the cat's name was Kelly. I'm really jealous of Kelly because she gets to sleep on my owner's bed. I'm not allowed because my owner thinks I might pee on his bed. I'm just a little puppy after all. So when I see Kelly I always growl at her. Kelly once scratched me on my face. It really hurts! I was so mad at Kelly! How dare she hurts me! I really don't understand why my owner got Kelly in the first place. She even poops in the house! Who does that? -Lele (Angela Z, student author)*

*Dear diary,*

*Today I saw something white and fluffy floating down from the sky. I think my owner, Bob, said it was snow. Then, before I could react, he would put on a itchy wool sweater on to me. Soon, I figured out that I could shake the sweater off, but when Bob realized, he would put the sweater back on. That would happen a lot, but then I found a solution. I would make sure he wasn't watching, then I'd take off the sweater and hide it under the couch. -Lucky (Stephanie W, student author)*



# Examples of Student Responses to Grades 2-3 Writing Assignments

Grades 2-3 Writing Assignment from Dragon Tales:

- Pretend that you work for the marketing department of the *Magicians Free Press* magazine and write a 50-250+ word advertisement for Clipper's Emporium, including a few imaginary but useful or attractive magical items not mentioned in the book.

*The magnificent and marvelously magical Clipper's Emporium is home to a infinite amount of wonderful and irresistible magic items. You can find everything from horse bottom jeans that walks by itself, magic pots that multiples everything that happens to tumble in by three, coffee mugs that refill whenever you're feeling lazy, and much more ! But there's only one problem: You just got to find it!*

*(Eloise Y, student author)*



# Sample Writing Assignments (Grades 4-6)

## Writing Assignment from Quests & Challenges:

- Write a 150-300+ word description or proposal about how the school to educate gifted children should be reorganized and what rules should be established. Don't forget to propose a new name!

# Examples of Student Responses to Grades 4-6 Writing Assignments

from Quests & Challenges:

*Dear Mr. Benedict,*

*I am thrilled to hear that you have been made the new headmaster of LIVE!!! Surely this will improve the school greatly. I have a number of suggestions.*

*First of all, to turn the whispering gallery into a theater, or an arts and crafts room. Something productive, because the whispering gallery's purpose is the opposite of that. The students could create, and not just obey. Their young minds could blossom with ideas and they would create wonderful things.*

*Another thing I would recommend for the whispering gallery is a library, which would not only help students with classwork, but would help them to enjoy books as well. And you certainly do have a lot of books.*

*Because being an executive is the highest position one can have, maybe it would be a good idea to organize groups that executives can lead. For example, a recycling squad or a service team, or maybe even a teacher helper club. If students can work together as well as the MBS does, then it will altogether make their futures alive with possibility, as well as making life easier for the new staff.*

*Also, it may be a good idea to have sport teams, so all the excess energy can be released. Some of the students will be like bulls in a china shop, but with periods to shed all that, BOOM! Happier kids all around.*

*One more thing. You will not be able to keep the name LIVE for the institute. I suggest maybe the name HOME, or The Helping Organization of Many Educations. It has a nice ring to it.*

*Congratulations again, on becoming headmaster.*

*Signed,*

*Grace A (student author)*



# Parent Comment about the Young Readers' Series

*“My daughter is gaining so much just from the short time that she has been enrolled in this course. The reading, self quiz, blog, discussion, and glossary motivate her to assume a more engaged role as a reader while incorporating more sophisticated language in her comments and this is evident in her schoolwork.”*

# Student Comment about the Young Readers' Series

*“Now I think about all books differently and consider things like plot, characters, and language.” - Student*

After weeks of reading, pondering, and sharing their ideas, young readers value the time spent thinking about well-written books.



# CONCLUSION



## CTY Online Programs: Young Readers' Series

- Is an innovative critical reading program for elementary school students
- Inspires children's appreciation of well-written books
- Exposes students to the pleasures of thoughtful reading
- Encourages exchanging ideas with online peers



# QUESTIONS? Contact

## CTY ONLINE PROGRAMS:

### **Young Readers' Critical Reading Series**

for students in Grades 2-3

for students in Grades 6-8

[cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/arts\\_humanities/young\\_readers\\_series.html](http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/arts_humanities/young_readers_series.html)

### **Interested in an Online Critical Reading Series for Older Students?**

### **Explore the Young Adult Readers' Series (Grades 7-9):**

[cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/arts\\_humanities/young\\_adult\\_readers\\_series.html](http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/arts_humanities/young_adult_readers_series.html)

**Katharine Thurlow**  
**Program Manager**  
**CTY Online Programs**  
**kthurlow@jhu.edu**  
**410-735-6144**