



Fiction Readers

Lessons and Activities

Challenging

Table of Contents

Implementation Guide Cover (1 page)

Table of Contents (1 page)

Reading Instruction Best Practices (4 pages)

How to Use This Program (8 pages)

Lesson Plan (12 pages)

Reader (17 pages)



Implementation Guide

Fiction **Readers**

**Challenging/
Challenging Plus**

Table of Contents

Program Welcome	4	How to Use This Program	32
Introduction	6	Kit Components	32
The Joy of Reading	6	Digital Resources.....	34
The Science of Reading Instruction.....	7	Getting Started.....	36
Research and Practice	8	Pacing Options	37
The Importance of		Assessment Options.....	38
Reading Fiction	8	Using the Diagnostic Assessment	
Matching Students to Text	9	and Summative Assessment	39
Elements of Fiction	10	Using the Oral Reading Record.....	41
Gradual Release of Responsibility.....	11	Assessment Data Charts.....	45
Key Reading Skills.....	12	Balanced-Reading	
Key Comprehension Strategies.....	14	Program Elements	49
Cultural Responsiveness.....	16	About the Books.....	51
School and Home Connections.....	17	Standards Correlations	58
Reading Instruction Best Practices	18	Introduction to Correlations	58
Guided Reading Instruction	18	Correlations Charts.....	59
Comprehension Instruction	20	Appendixes	63
Fluency Instruction and Practice	22	Appendix A:	
Lesson Extensions	24	Challenging and Challenging Plus	
Differentiation and Assessment	26	Scope and Sequence.....	63
Differentiation	26	Appendix B:	
Using Assessment to Guide Instruction.....	28	Program Scope and Sequence	66
The Instructional Setting	30	Appendix C:	
Managing Small Groups.....	30	Accessing the Digital Resources.....	68
Using Technology to Improve Reading.....	31	References	69

Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction begins with a simple 20-minute guided reading lesson.

► Introduce the Text

Quickly and efficiently introduce the book and prepare students to read. In just five minutes, present the elements of the book cover, identify the genre and/or establish a purpose for reading, and review reading behavior.

► Read the Text

Students read the passage aloud independently. Observe as students explore the story, experience appropriate struggle, and apply strategies to draw meaning from the text. After the passage has been read once, prompt students to share their initial understandings of the selection and their experiences with the act of reading. Respond with praise and problem-solving support. Lastly, guide the group through a targeted reread under teacher guidance.

► Discuss the Text

For the last five minutes of the lesson, use targeted questions and prompts to lead students to consider the text again and build a more complete understanding of what they have read.

Adventure at the Reef

Guided Reading Lesson

5 Introduce the Text

1. Display the front cover of the book. Read the title, author name, and illustrator name.
2. Let students know that this book is a story about a trip to a coral reef.
3. Remind students that readers look at the cover and table of contents; review the images from page to page; and think, talk, and ask questions about what they read.

10 Read the Text

1. Have each student read aloud pages 5–10 independently. Direct students to whisper read. As they read, observe each student's reading successes, struggles, and strategies.
2. Ask students to tell you about the passage. Encourage them to refer to the chapter titles, words, and illustrations.
3. Ask students to tell you specifically about the words in the story. Acknowledge the words or word parts students were able to recognize accurately. Use the following ideas to address words that caused struggle or inaccuracies:
 - **JUANITA**—Say, "This word is a name. In Spanish, *j* and *u* together make the /w/ sound. You may recognize the first part of the word, *Juan*, which is a boy's name. Adding *ita* to the end makes it a girl's name."
 - **OXYGEN**—Say, "The letter *y* sometimes acts as a vowel and makes the long or short *i* sound. In the word *oxygen*, it makes the short *i* sound. In the word *paralyzed*, it makes the long *i* sound."

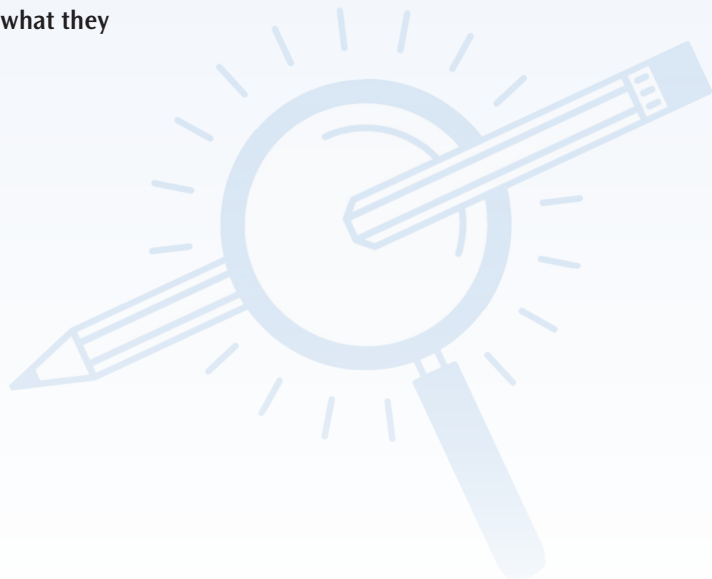
5 Discuss the Text

Use the following prompts to discuss the words and pictures that tell the story:

- *What do we learn about conflicts and relationships among family members in the first chapter?*
(less support) *What do we learn about conflicts and relationships in the first chapter?*
(more support) *What do we learn about the relationship between Lila's parents and how it makes her feel?*
- *Lila's father reviews diving rules with her. What could happen if she doesn't follow the rules?*
(less support) *Lila's father reviews diving rules with her. How might the author be using this as foreshadowing?*
(more support) *Why does Lila's father review the rules with her?*

Note: Have students complete the book before you teach the Comprehension Strategy Lesson.

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Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes a simple 20-minute comprehension strategy lesson:

► Introduce the Strategy

Quickly and efficiently, review the book and introduce a key comprehension strategy. In just five minutes, define the strategy and its purpose.

► Use the Strategy

Return to the story to model using the strategy to better understand the story. Students follow the model to use the strategy, with support, as they continue to reread the story.

► Discuss the Strategy

For the last five minutes of the lesson, guide students to restate the strategy and to identify when and how they will use the strategy with other books and reading tasks.

Comprehension Strategy Lesson

Introduce the Strategy

1. Display the front cover of the book. You may wish to review the title, author name, and illustrator name. Look at the cover, table of contents, and images.
2. Discuss how to establish a purpose for reading.
 - There are many purposes for reading. In some cases, the purpose is for entertainment. Sometimes, the purpose is to find the main idea or to form opinions. For this lesson, the purpose will be to learn something new.
 - Support students' efforts to identify information that is new to them.

Use the Strategy

1. Use the details below to model learning something new as you read page 9 together:
 - Just by reading the first page of Chapter Two, I am able to establish a purpose for reading and learning something new. Dr. Slippy mentions the declining honeybee population, so my purpose for reading is to learn about what is killing the honeybees.
2. Use the prompts below to guide students to identify new information as you read pages 10–11 together:
 - Why are honeybees important?
 - What are some possible reasons for the decline in the honeybee population?
3. Ask students to identify more new information after reading pages 12–14. Consider the prediction below:
 - From reading these pages, I learned that honeybees can be hot inside. I also learned that warm rains could be a reason for colony collapse disorder.
 - Have students read on in the book to identify new information.

Discuss the Strategy

Use the following prompts to discuss the comprehension strategy:

- We used the strategy of establishing a purpose for reading in order to learn something new.
- Talk to a partner about new information you learned.
- Any time you read or listen to a story, think about information you learn that you didn't know before.

Fiction Readers instruction includes a simple 15-minute close-reading lesson:

► Set a purpose for rereading.

The teacher guides students to think about story elements, word choice, language, or author's craft as they prepare to reread.

► Reread an excerpt.

Students reread a rich, complex passage from the book. As they read, they look for layers of meaning and tools used by the author to communicate meaning.

► Annotate and discuss specific tools used by the author.

Students find and explore specific examples to support and expand their ideas about the text and the author.

Revisit the Book

Class Reading Activity

Explain How Figurative Language

1. After reading the book, tell students they will reread a portion of it. Use the prompt below to explain that complex text often requires multiple reads:
 - Rereading a short excerpt very closely can help the reader notice more details and tools the author used to make the reader understand, feel, or wonder.
2. Discuss the author's use of figurative language. Say, "Today, we're going to read closely to look for the author's use of figurative language. Figurative language helps the reader form a vivid mental image about what is happening. If I wanted to say I was really hungry, I might say 'I gobbled up my food like a starving lion.'"
3. Have students reread pages 21–26, thinking about the author's use of figurative language.
4. Have students share their thoughts about figurative language in the chapter. Guide students to explain the language that helped them form mental images. Use the following example, if needed:
 - On page 23, the author mentions how the bees were moving, and he writes that they were like a crowd doing the wave at a football game. I'm able to imagine the bees moving back and forth.
5. Provide three to five sticky notes to each student. Have students work in pairs to identify specific uses of figurative language. Use the following prompt, if needed:
 - How does the author describe the way the bees were blocking the entrance to the hive (giving out in ones like an army)?
6. Discuss figurative language the author used to make the reader understand, feel, or wonder. Encourage students to read small excerpts aloud to illustrate the author's use of figurative language.

Focused Fluency Activity

1. Explain that when reading text aloud, we do not read word by word. Instead, we tend to read in phrases or chunks of words. Write the following sentence on the board: They zipped up and made their way to the center of the hive. Show students how the words are spoken in phrases by adding slashes between phrases: They / zipped up / and / made their way / to the center of the hive.
2. Have student pairs select passages that are 100 words or more to practice reading fluently with expression and focusing on reading the text in phrases or chunks of words.

Reader's Theater Activity

- Have students read through the script on page 5.
- Switch roles for repeated readings.

Assessment Opportunity

The Oral Reading Record (pages 10–11) assesses students' abilities to read fluently and accurately.

Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes three options for fluency instruction and practice:

► Focused Fluency Practice

Define and model one aspect of expressive reading that fits well with the story. You may highlight the best way to read dialogue or how a reader's cadence changes when reading long sentences. Students then read the book with strong expression to a partner or group.

► Reader's Theater

Students work together to prepare a performance of the story. They read a script of the story several times, concluding in a performative read aloud. Teachers may choose to assign roles or allow students to choose them. Each script includes roles for advanced, on-grade level, and striving readers.

► Fluency Model

Students listen to the professional recording of the story.

Reader's Theater

The Egg Salad Sandwich Incident

(Jesse, Timothy, and Lucy are eating lunch together in the cafeteria.)

Jesse: I'm so glad we don't have to serve lunch detention anymore. That was miserable!

Lucy: Me, too!

Jesse: So, Timothy, tell us what's up with you and bacteria, I mean germs. Some horrible experience had to have happened that made you so freaked out.

Timothy: No reason. Well, I mean, it's a ridiculous reason. Completely unreasonable. Let's just say I'm sensitive to germs, OK?

Jesse: No, really! I'm interested to know. There's a reason I'm so afraid of spiders.

Lucy: I don't like spiders, either.

Jesse: Believe me, mine is an all-out, irrational fear of arachnids. I'd go flying up on the table if I saw one right now.

Timothy: No way! I can't imagine you doing that.

Jesse: It's true! What about you, Lucy Goosy? Do you have any unexplained, irrational fears?

Lucy: I'm afraid of elevators. I don't know why, really. Makes me nervous just thinking about it.

Timothy: Well, I am dumbfounded! I always thought Lucy was completely fearless. I guess there is a reason I'm a germaphobe, but I'm embarrassed to say.

Jesse: OK, go ahead.

Timothy: When I was little, my mother concocted a story, saying I was going to get sick and die if I didn't wash my hands before a meal. She was joking, of course, but I was only seven, so I believed her. She felt sad and guilty about saying it, but it caused irreparable damage. She didn't realize how much it would affect me. I'm always thinking I'm going to catch some incurable disease.

Lucy: So, what about you, Jesse? There has to be some fantastic story about you and spiders.

Jesse: When I was at summer camp a long time ago, I was in my cabin one night. The camp counselor was in the room having a conversation with us about our crazy behavior and... *(Jesse sees a spider on the lunch table.)* Aaaaaah! Hey, Timothy! You should sit with us again tomorrow.

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103144—Fiction Readers: The Egg Salad Sandwich Incident 5



Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes four options for extending each lesson:

► Word Study

Focus on a word pattern that is found in the story and can be widely generalized to other texts students will encounter. In the lower levels of the program, instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, and basic decoding. In the upper levels, more sophisticated aspects of decoding are taught along with morphemes and vocabulary strategies. Each lesson includes a brief mini-lesson and student activity page.

► Fluency Model

Students listen to the professional recording of the story. They can listen to the audio alone as they follow along in the print book or listen to the audio embedded in the read-along eBook.

► Writing about Reading

The writing activity prompts students to write about what they have read. They are encouraged to draw upon the story and the discussions around the text to complete the activity. A reproducible activity page is included.

► Content-Area Connection

The content-area connection links the topic and vocabulary from the story to mathematics, science, social studies, or arts and movement. Most activities can be completed independently. A reproducible activity page is included.

The Egg Salad Sandwich Incident

Extension Options

Word Study

oo Vowel Digraph

- Draw students' attention to the fact that the story contains many words with the oo vowel digraph, such as *Kooser* and *textbook*.
 - The oo vowel digraph sometimes makes the sound heard in *book*. It sometimes makes the long u sound heard in *cool*.
 - Have students look at the word *school* on page 6 in the book. Ask them to identify the sound oo makes in that word. On the same page, have them find another oo word that makes the vowel sound in *book* (*took*).
 - Have them find two more words on the same page that have oo (*cool*, *Kooser*). Ask students to identify the sound heard in each.
 - Explain that oo is a digraph, but it makes different sounds, depending on the words in which it appears.
- Have students search for other words with the oo vowel digraph in the book. Record the words on the board or on chart paper.
- Use the activity on page 7 to practice sorting the words according to sound and using them in appropriate sentences.

Fluency Model

- Have students listen to the professional recording of the book (provided in the Digital Resources).

Writing about Reading

Advice Poster

- Think about what it would be like to be the new kid at school. What is the best way to fit in?
- Create a poster with advice for new students (page 8).
- Make sure to tell about activities kids can do at your school and what they can do to try to make new friends.
- If time allows, have students share their posters with their classmates.

Science Connection

Healthy Shake Recipe

- The kids at the cool table made disgusting concoctions to drink.
- Create your own concoction, but make it healthy by including a fruit, a vegetable, and a healthy carbohydrate (page 9). For example, your shake might have orange juice, spinach leaves, and quinoa.
- If time allows, have students share their recipes with their classmates.

Assessment Opportunity

Use the Comprehension Assessment (page 12) to assess students' abilities to understand the story.

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Kit Components

Book Trios

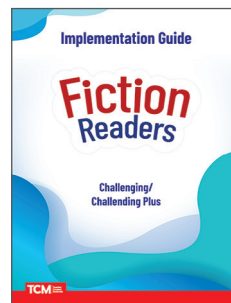
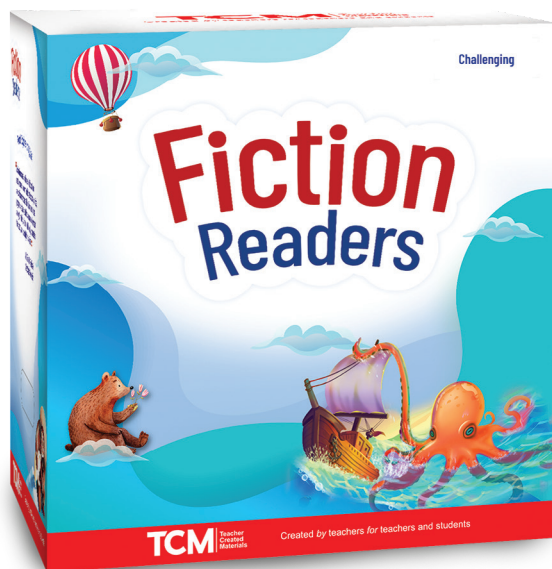
Each trio of full-color books offers different stories based on a common theme.



Challenging

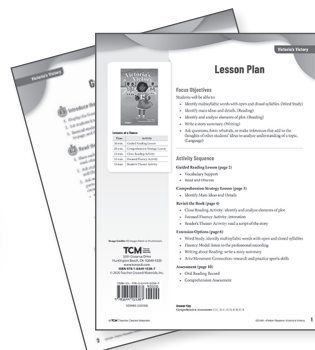


Challenging Plus



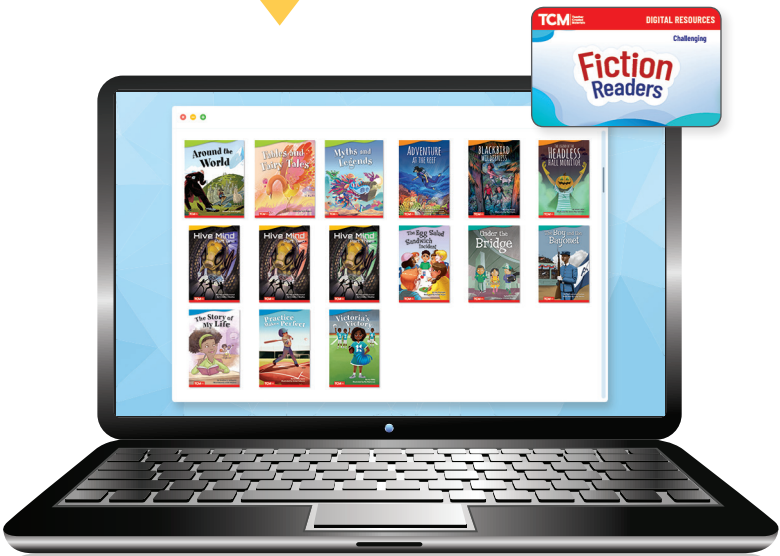
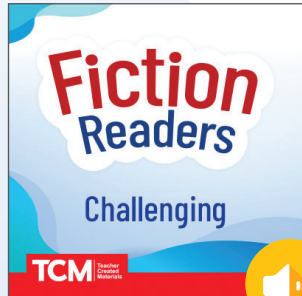
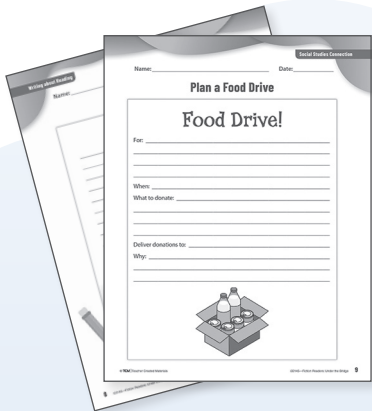
Implementation Guide

This teacher resource supports best practices for literacy instruction.



Lesson Plan

The 12-page Lesson Plan provides a consistent lesson format for every book. Plans include the lesson, assessments, extension options, and student activity pages.



Digital Resources

The following digital resources are available via digital download:

Books

- Audiobooks
- eBooks
- Read-Along eBooks

Teacher Resources

- lesson plans with student pages
- additional resources
- Family Tips booklet
- Scope and Sequence
- Reader's Theater Script Cover

Assessment Options

Informal Assessments

Every lesson includes opportunities for teachers to observe students' reading behaviors. With every book, students read aloud, discuss their reading and thinking, and complete activity pages that require them to return to the ideas they read.

Diagnostic and Summative Assessments

The **Diagnostic Assessment** can be used to prioritize instruction for specific student groups by documenting their successful use of comprehension strategies. The **Summative Assessment** can be used to document increased successes after instruction. These also provide practice with standardized test formats. After completion, they can be stored in students' portfolios if desired. See pages 39–40 for details on administering the tests.

Formative Assessments

An **Oral Reading Record** form is included in the lesson for each book. This assessment documents students' reading behaviors as they read a text aloud. It can be used before students are introduced to the book (a cold read) to measure students' performance, or it can be used after students have become familiar with the book to measure the effectiveness of the lesson. You will not likely administer the oral reading records for each book but will choose points at which they need data to make instructional decisions for specific students. See pages 41–48, for details about administering the assessment and data charts.

A **comprehension assessment** is included in the lesson for each book. This assessment measures students' comprehension of the story and use of comprehension strategies. It can be used as a formal formative assessment or as a guided activity. Depending on the instructional needs, you may not have students complete every assessment. Details about administering the assessment are included in each lesson. See pages 45 and 47 for data charts.

Oral Reading Record

Name: _____ Date: _____

The End of Chocolate

Total Word Count		Codes			
118	E = errors	SC = self-corrections	M = meaning	S = structure	V = vocal
Word Count	Text	E	SC	S	V
9	Zoey and her dad looked at each other apologetically.			M	S
19	They followed Amara to the back of the store, where she disappeared into the warehouse.			M	S
33	When she came back, Amara was greeted with gasps.			M	S
40	"Oh, wow!" Zoey practically yelled. Amara was holding a bag of the <i>Chocolatier</i> chips.			M	S
46	"Thank you so much!" Amara exclaimed. "That's actually what I wanted to ask you. What's with the shortage? First, chocolate products were outrageously expensive. Then, they disappeared from shelves. I heard on the news this is occurring all over the country. What's the deal?"			M	S
55	Amara sighed. "It's been tough. My manager told me that at the <i>Chocolatier</i> Grocery Guild issued a statement that amara trees are not producing any cocoa pods."			M	S
61				M	S
67				M	S
73				M	S
79				M	S
85				M	S
91				M	S
97				M	S
103				M	S
109				M	S
115				M	S

Error Rate: Self-Correction Rate: Accuracy Percentage: Time:

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Comprehension Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

The End of Chocolate

Directions: Read each question, and choose the best answer.

- Which sentence from the book helps the reader best visualize what is happening to the cocoa trees in West Africa?
 - The twins rolled their eyes and groaned.
 - Zoey was a redhead and Zoey had brown hair like his mom.
 - They are also infecting crops at a frightening speed.
 - The farmers also reported getting bitten when they picked the cocoa beans.
- Consider the following word: *un-flap-pa-ble*. Which kind of syllable helped you determine the vowel sound of *flap*?
 - vowel team
 - controlled
 - open syllable
 - closed syllable
- Since this story is written in third-person point of view, who is more likely to be the narrator of this story?
 - a reporter from the future
 - Dr. Chen
 - the farmers
 - Hazel
- Which is the best summary of the epilogue?
 - Joey had a daughter named Hazel.
 - Many years had passed and there was still no chocolate.
 - Real chocolate is much better than fake chocolate.
 - Joey and Zoey still missed their dad's chocolate chip cookies.
- Zoey and Joey are fraternal twins, with Zoey having red hair and Joey having brown hair. Why did the author include these details?
 - to persuade people that fraternal twins are always a boy and a girl
 - to explain that there are different types of twins
 - to describe what twins look like
 - to share how easily twins can communicate with each other

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Using the Oral Reading Record

Administering the Assessment

Timing

Teachers may choose to use the records at the first reading and/or after students are familiar with the book. There are two schools of thought regarding oral reading records. Some say that they should be used only with books that students have never read. Others say that they are best used with books with which students are familiar. Use your discretion to determine the best use for students.

Frequency

Oral reading records may be used with any or all of the books in this kit. Traditional use suggests a selection of one book from each reading level to use as a marker for that level as a whole. Reading records are most commonly used every two to six weeks. Of course, teachers may use them when and how they feel will best serve their classroom needs.

The image shows two versions of the 'Practice Makes Perfect' oral reading record form. The left version is the text of the passage, and the right version is the coding chart and recording table.

Text of the Passage:

Practice Makes Perfect

Enrique stood outside the chalked batter's box, eyes closed, swaying his hips to the salsa music in his head. The umpire barked, "Hey kid, this ain't a nightclub, plus ball!" The parents on both sides of the field laughed, and the pitcher smirked. Enrique assumed his stance in the box as the pitcher slung a fastball toward home plate. "Outside, ball over!" chattered the ump. Enrique focused on the pitcher as another fastball sped right down the pike.

Enrique's hips shot forward, his arms following powerfully behind, and he absolutely demolished the ball. Roberts screamed, "1879!" Enrique stared at the ball with amazement as it rose toward the clouds, deep toward left field! He whirled his bat to the ground and elevated his arms to the sky. The ball drifted, drifted, drifted, and floated just outside the foul pole.

"YOU! BALL, strike one!"

This passage is taken from pages 21–22 in the book.

Recording Form:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Practice Makes Perfect

Total Word Count		Codes				
143	E = error	SC = self-correction	M = misreading	S = structure	V = visual	
Word Count	Text	E	SC	Codes Used		
				E	SC	
1	Enrique stood outside the chalked batter's box, eyes			M	S	V
2	closed, swaying his hips to the salsa music in his head.			M	S	V
3	The umpire barked, "Hey kid, this ain't a nightclub, plus			M	S	V
4	ball!" The parents on both sides of the field laughed,			M	S	V
5	and the pitcher smirked. Enrique assumed his stance in			M	S	V
6	the box as the pitcher slung a fastball toward home plate.			M	S	V
7	"Outside, ball over!" chattered the ump. Enrique focused			M	S	V
8	on the pitcher as another fastball sped right down the pike.			M	S	V
9	Enrique's hips shot forward, his arms following powerfully			M	S	V
10	behind, and he absolutely demolished the ball. Roberts			M	S	V
11	screamed, "1879!" Enrique stared at the ball with			M	S	V
12	amazement as it rose toward the clouds, deep toward			M	S	V
13	left field! He whirled his bat to the ground and elevated			M	S	V
14	his arms to the sky. The ball drifted, drifted, drifted, and			M	S	V
15	floated just outside the foul pole.			M	S	V
16	"YOU! BALL, strike one!"			M	S	V

Rate: Error Rate Self-Correction Rate Accuracy Percentage Times

Administration Tips

When taking an oral reading record, it may be useful to employ some or all of the following tips:

- Position yourself next to the student in such a way that you can hear the student easily, see the text clearly, and watch the student's eye and finger movements while he or she is reading.
- As the student reads, mark the oral reading record form with the conventions on the included coding chart on the following page.
- Use a stopwatch that is easy to read and reset to time student.
- If the student begins to read too quickly for you to follow, simply ask him or her to pause for a moment while you catch up with the record.
- Interrupt and intervene as needed to create the truest record of reading behaviors.
- Wait several seconds when a student gets stuck before reading a word aloud for the student.
- If a student misreads a word, be sure to write the word he or she said above the correct word on the record form.



Using the Oral Reading Record *(cont.)*

Scoring an Oral Reading Record

► **Meaning, Structure, and Visual Cues**

- **Meaning:** When the reader uses background knowledge and the context to identify words, he or she is using meaning (or semantic cues). On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with an *M*.
- **Structure:** When the reader applies knowledge of language structure in order to identify words, he or she is using structure (or syntax) cues. On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with an *S*.
- **Visual:** When the reader applies knowledge of letter and sound correspondence, including the look of the letter, letters, and the word itself, he or she is using visual (or graphophonic) cues. On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with a *V*.

Use the information gathered while observing the student and marking the record in order to calculate rates of accuracy, error, and self-correction.

After or while marking the oral reading record, tally errors and self-corrections in the columns to the right of the text. Then, circle whether those errors and self-corrections are in the area of meaning (*M*), structure (*S*), or visual (*V*) cues.

Use any of the following data calculations as appropriate:

- Calculate the rate of error. Add the total number of words read. Divide the number of errors made by that number. (**Note:** When the reader self-corrects, the original error is not scored as an error.)

For example, if the text has 96 words and 8 errors were made, the ratio is 1:12 (one error for every 12 words read).

- Calculate the rate of self-correction. Add both the number of errors and self-corrections. Then, divide the number of self-corrections by that number.

For example, 8 errors and 6 self-corrections make 14 total. Divide the number of self-corrections (6) by 14. This gives a ratio of 1:2.3 or, rounded, 1:2. This is interpreted as one self-correction for every two errors.

- Calculate a percentage for accuracy. Convert the error rate to judge the difficulty of the text. Use the information in the chart below to inform text selections for students.

For example, in a 1:12 error rate, divide 1 by 12 to get 0.08 (round to the nearest hundredth) or 8%. Subtract 8% from 100% to get 92%. This is the accuracy percentage.

Use the information below to determine test difficulty.

Accuracy Percentage	Difficulty of Text for Student
96% or higher	Easy
91%–95%	Instructional Level
90% or lower	Challenging

Note: If you do not wish to assess with this level of detail, simply calculate the percentage of words read correctly and the number of words read correctly per minute.

Marking Conventions Chart

Behavior	Marking Convention	Example
Accurate reading	checkmark above each word read	✓ ✓ ✓ This is big.
Substitution	word read above actual word	✓ ✓ -bag This is big.
Omission	— (long dash)	✓ — ✓ This is big.
Insertion	^ and the inserted word	very ^ This is big.
Repetition of word (no error)	R (one repetition) R2 (two repetitions)	R This is big.
Repetition of phrase (no error)	R with line and arrow at point where reader returned	R ↻ This is big.
Self-correction (no error)	SC after error	bag/SC This is big.
Appeal (Student appeals for help either verbally or nonverbally.)	A over word where appeal occurred	A This is big.
Told (Student is asked to try again but ultimately must be told the word.)	T over word student was told	T This is big.
Beginning sound read separately and then word read correctly.	beginning sound above word, followed by mark for correct	b/✓ This is big.

Balanced-Reading Program Elements

Learning Centers and Independent Practice

One of the challenges of a guided reading program is making sure students who are not in the small instructional group you are currently working with are constructively engaged. Each lesson provides suggestions for extension and writing activities that can be completed in centers with adult assistance.

Additional suggestions for using the books and lesson content to create centers are listed below:

- Make a list of the characters in the story. Assign roles, and choose character voices. Maintain the voices throughout the story.
- Add music to the story by creating a playlist that can act as a soundtrack for the book. Place sticky notes in the book, indicating where each song should be played.
- Discuss possible sound effects to add to the story. Write them on sticky notes in the margins of the book. Add the sound effects into your reading of the story.
- Be a book critic. Write a review of what you liked and what could have been better, then rate the book on a scale of one to five stars.
- Give your child the choice of reading aloud to you while you are doing chores—or the reverse.
- Do echo reading—you read a line, with expression and attention to punctuation, and your child repeats it after you.



Balanced-Reading Program Elements *(cont.)*

Writing

The lesson plan for each book includes a specific writing activity. Additionally, writing is integrated into each of the activity sheets. Depending on the level of the kit, the writing activities vary from students completing sentence frames or writing simple sentences to writing short stories or letters as a way to apply the new skills they learn to show comprehension of the story.

Additional suggestions for using the books and lesson content to prompt writing follow:

- Write a comic strip that captures the essence of a story.
- Write a letter to the editor from the point of view of a character, such as the Big Bad Wolf defending himself against trying to harm Granny or Little Red Riding Hood.
- Write a new twist on an old tale, such as the three pigs breaking into Goldilock's house.
- Become an advice columnist for characters that can't stay out of trouble.
- Write and illustrate a book jacket for a favorite book.

Independent Reading

The books from *Fiction Readers* provide quality, high-interest, easy-to-read content. As such, they can be added to classroom libraries for use as independent reading selections. Read-Along eBooks can be made available to students via classroom devices. Many readers will want to return to previously studied books on their own.





Lessons at a Glance

Time	Activity
20 min.	Guided Reading Lesson
20 min.	Comprehension Strategy Lesson
15 min.	Close Reading Activity
15 min.	Focused Fluency Activity
15 min.	Reader's Theater Activity

Lesson Plan

Focus Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Decode multisyllabic words. (Word Study)
- Make and confirm predictions. (Reading)
- Analyze the influence of setting. (Reading)
- Write a postcard home. (Writing)
- Communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts. (Language)

Activity Sequence

Guided Reading Lesson (page 2)

- Vocabulary Support
- Read and Discuss

Comprehension Strategy Lesson (page 3)

- Make and Confirm Predictions

Revisit the Book (page 4)

- Close Reading Activity: analyze the influence of setting
- Focused Fluency Activity: accuracy
- Reader's Theater Activity: read a script of the story

Extension Options (page 6)

- Word Study: decoding multisyllabic word
- Fluency Model: listen to the professional recording
- Writing about Reading: write a postcard
- Arts/Movement Connection: drawing of a dinner housemate

Assessment (page 10)

- Oral Reading Record
- Comprehension Assessment

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Answer Key

Comprehension Assessment: 1) C, 2) B, 3) B, 4) A, 5) D

Guided Reading Lesson



Introduce the Text

1. Display the front cover of the book. Read the title, author name, and illustrator name.
2. Let students know that this book is a story about a student who loves science.
3. Remind students that readers look at the cover and table of contents; review the images from page to page; and think, talk, and ask questions about what they read.



Read the Text

1. Have each student read aloud pages 5–8 independently. Direct students to whisper read. As they read, observe each student’s reading successes, struggles, and strategies.
2. Ask students to tell you about the passage. Encourage them to refer to the chapter titles, words, and illustrations.
3. Ask students to tell you specifically about the words in the story. Acknowledge the words or word parts students were able to recognize accurately. Use the following idea to address words that caused struggle or inaccuracies:
 - **DIGIPACK**—Say, “This word has *g* in it that makes the soft /j/ sound. Sometimes, *g* makes the hard sound /g/. Typically, when *g* is followed by *e*, *i*, or *y*, it makes the /j/ sound. When followed by *a*, *o*, or *u*, it makes the /g/ sound.” Have students think of other words that make the soft *g* sound (*gym*, *gentle*, *digital*). Ask students to share what they think a *digipack* is. If necessary, help them understand that since the digipack was delivered to the house by the Postal Service and the author tells us it is a box, it is probably a package containing digital, rather than written, information.



Discuss the Text

Use the following prompts to discuss the words and pictures that tell the story:

- *In what time period does this story take place?*
(less support) *What can we tell about the time period of the story?*
(more support) *How can you tell that the story takes place in the future?*
- *Why do you think the package delivered to Sidney told him not to open it?*
(less support) *How does the package pique Sidney’s curiosity?*
(more support) *The package says DO NOT OPEN! How does that message make Sidney curious?*

Note: Have students complete the book before you teach the Comprehension Strategy Lesson.

Comprehension Strategy Lesson



Introduce the Strategy

1. Display the front cover of the book. You may wish to review the title, author name, and illustrator name. Look at the cover, table of contents, and images.
2. Describe how to make and confirm predictions:
 - Predictions are educated guesses about what will be read in the story. They help the reader engage with the story.
 - Support and refine predictions with evidence from the text.



Use the Strategy

1. Use the details below to model making and confirming predictions as you read page 9 together:
 - Without even being aware of it, we make predictions as we read. For example, I thought Sidney was going to get in trouble immediately when his mother saw what he had done to the voxpod, but I see at the beginning of Chapter Two that she chooses to deal with it later. That's just a small prediction, but still a prediction I made without putting much thought into it. There will be more predictions we can make based on more significant parts of the story.
2. Use the prompts below to guide students to make and confirm predictions as you read pages 10–11 together:
 - On page 10, the author tells us that Sidney's mother grins about the digipack. *What can you predict about her knowledge of the digipack?*
 - *What do you predict Sidney will do when he gets home?*
3. Ask students to make and confirm predictions after reading pages 12–14. Consider the sample prediction below:
 - Based on the conversation Sidney overhears between the teacher and the principal, I can tell that they are more concerned about Sidney than mad at him, and I predict they will come up with a plan to try to interest him more in his studies.
 - Have students read on in the book to confirm their own predictions or make changes.



Discuss the Strategy

Use the following prompts to discuss the comprehension strategy:

- We used the strategy of making and confirming predictions to engage with the text.
- Talk to a partner about predictions you made and whether they happened in the chapter.
- Any time you read or listen to a story, think about making and confirming predictions.

Revisit the Book



Close Reading Activity

Analyze the Influence of Setting

1. After reading the book, tell students they will reread a portion of it. Use the prompt below to explain that complex texts often require multiple reads:
 - Rereading a short excerpt very closely can help the reader notice more details and tools the author used to help the reader understand, feel, or wonder.
2. Discuss analyzing the influence of setting. Say, “Today, we’re going to read closely, paying attention to the setting and the influence it has on the story. The setting helps us understand the timeframe of the story, and it helps us form mental images of the characters’ surroundings.”
3. Have students reread pages 15–20, thinking about the setting and its influence on the story.
4. Have students share their thoughts about the setting. Guide students to justify their ideas by sharing what the author writes that describes a futuristic setting. Use the following example, if needed:
 - The author mentions a hovercar and that there is a Housemate that cooks dinner. The author also mentions the package being closed with holotape. When Sidney opens the box, amazing things happen. These all help create a futuristic backdrop for the story.
5. Provide three to five sticky notes to each student. Have student pairs read, placing sticky notes beside text that indicates elements of the setting that are futuristic. Direct them to find specific examples of how the author describes the setting. Use the following prompts, if needed:
 - *What images come to mind as you read about what happens when Sidney opens the digipack?*
 - *What colors, sounds, and movements come to mind as you read?*
6. Discuss the setting of the story and tools the author used to help the reader understand, feel, or wonder. Encourage students to read small excerpts aloud that illustrate the futuristic setting.



Focused Fluency Activity

1. Remind students that, when reading aloud, it is important to read accurately. This involves reading smoothly and without mistakes. It is helpful to review the text, either silently or by whisper reading, before reading aloud to become familiar with it.
2. Have student pairs select passages that are 100 words or more to practice reading smoothly and as error-free as possible.



Reader’s Theater Activity

- Have students read through the script on page 5.
- Switch roles for repeated readings.

Assessment Opportunity

The Oral Reading Record (pages 10–11) assesses students’ abilities to read fluently and accurately.

Hive Mind: Part One

Penny: Remember that you boys have Introduction to Mutation class tomorrow. You'll want to be rested so you can pay close attention.

Sidney: What are we going to learn about mutation?

Penny: Well, that's the whole idea. You have to come to class to see what it's about.

Hari: They told us the curriculum here is going to challenge us to think in ways we never have before. I'm so excited about it. And did you see all of the skyscrapers from the window? I wonder what's inside all of those buildings.

Penny: It's a mystery...at least for now. All of our new candidates are filled with the same kind of wonder you both are experiencing now.

Sidney: I can assure you, this is way better than what was in store for me at home. I was going to be grounded with no access to the intermaze forever.

Hari: What did you do to deserve that?

Sidney: I was disrespectful to my teacher, but I'm completely bored with that school. Just the name alone, Bleaker High School, screams, "Boring!" It's truly a bleak place. And my teacher's name is Ms. Dirge.

Hari: No way, like a funeral? That does sound bleak. Well, we have inquisitive minds with a passion for discovery. Looks like this is going to be a journey that will keep our minds whirring.

Sidney: I want to learn more about artificial intelligence. I've also been unsuccessfully deconstructing numerous appliances at home, and my mom is about to kill me. Hey, did the artificial intelligence robot come to your house with an invitation, too?

Hari: Yes, it just appeared from a digipack. My parents didn't know I had applied for the program. They didn't think I would want to stay, but they let me go. I had no idea I was accepted until today.

Sidney: Me either! I wonder if that's part of the strategy they use. They surprise us with the information and then immediately send us on our way.

Penny: Boys, you're going to have a lot of time to talk about this, but if you don't get some sleep, you'll be exhausted tomorrow. You have no idea how invigorating and exhausting school can be!

Extension Options

Word Study

Multisyllabic Words

1. Explain that we sometimes encounter long words that are unfamiliar to us.
 - Breaking long words into syllables can help us decode them.
 - Have students look at the word *mysterious* on page 5 in the book. Tell students that this may not be an unfamiliar word, but it has four syllables, so it will be useful as an example.
 - Write the word on the board in the following manner and sound it out with students: *mys-te-ri-ous*.
 - Explain that covering up parts of the word and reading it in smaller bits makes decoding easier.
2. Have students search for longer words in the book and break them into parts to decode them.
 - Record the words on the board or on chart paper. Tell students that when decoding, it is not necessary to break them down perfectly into syllables. They might even read two syllables at a time when they decode.
3. Use the activity on page 7 to practice reading multisyllabic words.

Fluency Model

- Have students listen to the professional recording of the book (provided in the Digital Resources).

Writing about Reading

Postcard

1. Review the storyline of *Hive Mind: Part One*.
2. Have students think about Sidney's experience and what he would want to tell his mother about his first day at Sci Hi. Have students assume the role of Sidney and write postcards home, telling about their experiences (page 8).
3. Encourage students to write in a way that shows Sidney's excitement and amazement about being at school so far. Make sure to include at least one prediction Sidney has about what will happen at Sci Hi.
4. If time allows, have students share their postcards with their classmates.

Arts/Movement Connection

Descriptive Drawing

1. Help students make mental images of what Housemate looks like and can do.
 - *Does it look like a person, a robot, or a machine? Is it able to speak? Can it think on its own?*
2. Have students draw a picture of Housemate at work and describe its abilities (page 9).
3. If time allows, have students share their drawings with their classmates.

Assessment Opportunity

Use the Comprehension Assessment (page 12) to assess students' abilities to understand the story.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Decoding Multisyllabic Words

Directions: Cut out the cards. Read the parts of each word, and then say the whole word. With a partner, play a game where one student reads the parts of a word, one by one (*in-*, *inter-*). The other student says the whole word (*intermaze*) as soon as he or she knows it.

nan- nan-o- nan-o-cir- nan-o-cir-cuit nanocircuit	in- in-ter- in-ter-maze intermaze	de- de-con- de-con-struct- de-con-struct-ed deconstructed	hol- hol-o- hol-o-gram hologram	op- op-por- op-por-tu- op-por-tu-ni- op-por-tu-ni-ty opportunity
mes- mes-mer- mes-mer-ized mesmerized	in- in-quis- in-quis-i- in-quis-i-tive inquisitive	ar- ar-ti- ar-ti-fi- ar-ti-fi-cial artificial		
	in- in-ter- in-ter-na- in-ter-na-tion- in-ter-na-tion-al international			
	ap- ap-pli- ap-pli-ance appliance			

Name: _____

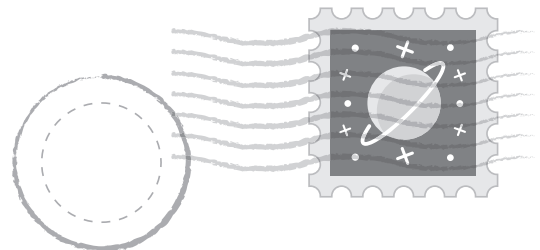
Date: _____

Postcard from Sci Hi

Directions: Write a post card from Sidney to his mother telling her about his first day at Sci Hi. Include at least one prediction that Sidney could have about what will happen at Sci Hi.



Dear Mom,

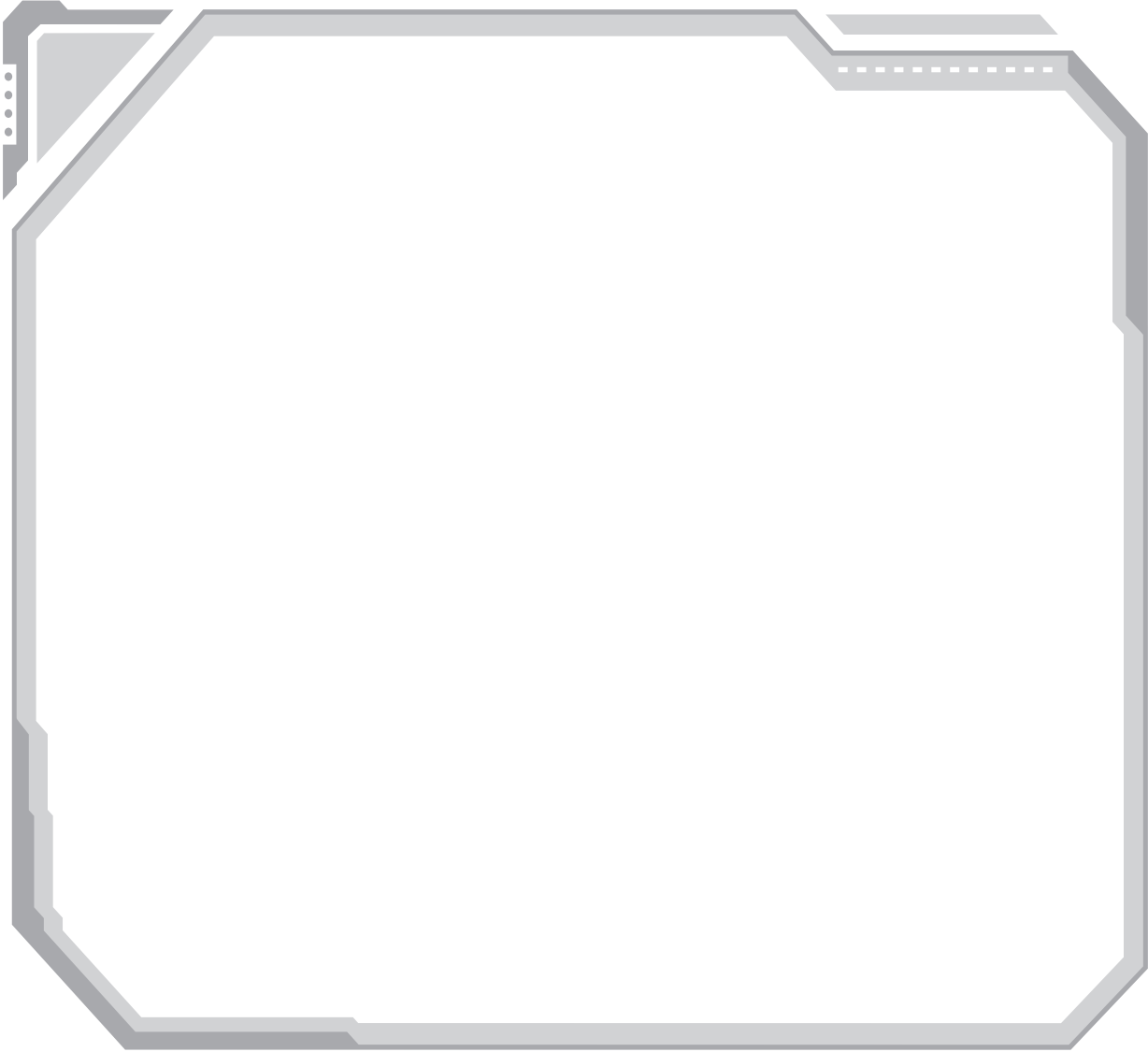


Name: _____

Date: _____

Dinner Housemate

Directions: Draw a detailed picture of Housemate at work. Describe its abilities.



Hive Mind: Part One

Sidney tried to remember the whispers he had heard about Sci Hi. Rumor has it that the school started as an international laboratory where scientists could meet, discuss their work with one another, and conduct groundbreaking research. Some people said the scientists there could control gravity—and even time. The faculty was said to be made up of the world’s top scientists. And the students were rumored to be the best of the best.

“What do you say?” Sid’s mom had out her freshly replicated voxpod, ready to call the school.

Still thunderstruck, Sid just looked at her and nodded.

She gave him a thumbs-up as she left the room to make the call.

Sidney grabbed his voxpod from his desk and laid down. He said, “Search subject: Sci Hi,” and projected the results onto the ceiling. Sid gazed up at the intermaze results and tried to find out what was in store for him.



This passage was taken from pages 22–23 in the book.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Hive Mind: Part One

Total Word Count	Codes				
156	E = errors	SC = self-corrections	M = meaning	S = structure	V = visual

Word Count	Text	E	SC	Cues Used	
				E	SC
10	Sidney tried to remember the whispers he had heard about			M S V	M S V
21	Sci Hi. Rumor has it that the school started as an			M S V	M S V
28	international laboratory where scientists could meet, discuss			M S V	M S V
36	their work with one another, and conduct groundbreaking			M S V	M S V
44	research. Some people said the scientists there could			M S V	M S V
55	control gravity—and even time. The faculty was said to be			M S V	M S V
66	made up of the world's top scientists. And the students were			M S V	M S V
74	rumored to be the best of the best.			M S V	M S V
85	“What do you say?” Sid’s mom had out her freshly replicated			M S V	M S V
91	voxpod, ready to call the school.			M S V	M S V
100	Still thunderstruck, Sid just looked at her and nodded.			M S V	M S V
114	She gave him a thumbs-up as she left the room to make the			M S V	M S V
115	call.			M S V	M S V
125	Sidney grabbed his voxpod from his desk and laid down.			M S V	M S V
135	He said, “Search subject: Sci Hi,” and projected the results			M S V	M S V
146	onto the ceiling. Sid gazed up at the intermaze results and			M S V	M S V
156	tried to find out what was in store for him.			M S V	M S V

Error Rate:
Self-Correction Rate:
Accuracy Percentage:
Time:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hive Mind: Part One

Directions: Read each question, and choose the best answer.

- Which of the following is the best prediction about Zero-G Ball based on the text?
 - I predict that it is a game where players throw a ball at each other.
 - I predict that it is a game where a ball is bounced.
 - I predict that it is a game where the players float around with no gravity.
 - I predict that the players spell words without using the letter *g*.
- Which set of words describes the setting of the book?
 - present-day, suburban neighborhood
 - future, suburban neighborhood
 - future, outer space
 - past, rural area
- Which of the following best describes the term *groundbreaking research*?
 - research that is yet to be discovered
 - research that is new and innovative
 - research that has to do with soil exploration
 - research that proves a previous theory wrong
- At the end of the book, the author leaves the reader wondering _____.
 - what school will be like for Sidney
 - what artificial intelligence is
 - whether Sidney will get in trouble for his behavior at school
 - how Sidney's mother feels about the destruction of her voxpod
- What is the author's purpose for writing the book?
 - solving a mystery
 - persuading the reader
 - sharing factual information
 - entertainment

Hive Mind

Part One



Written and Illustrated
by Timothy J. Bradley

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Chapter One:	
Mysterious Mail	5
Chapter Two:	
The Outburst	9
Chapter Three:	
Too Good to Be True?	15
Chapter Four:	
Chance of a Lifetime	21
Chapter Five:	
Adventure Begins	27
About Me	32



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CHAPTER ONE



Mysterious Mail

A tiny screw, a metal bracket, and a mysterious pulsing wire mocked Sidney from his messy desk. His workspace was littered with nanocircuits, a sonic welder, and other tools.

Leftover parts are never a good thing, 13-year-old Sidney Jamison

thought. He touched the glossy case of his mom's new voxpod. It should have blinked to life with lights and sound. But nothing happened.

Curious about how the thing worked, he had taken it apart after his mom dozed off. He tried to put it back together before she needed it again. *That's not going to happen now*, he thought.

Sidney glanced around his messy room. There were plenty of places to hide the voxpod until he could figure out the best way to break the news to his mom without getting grounded with no intermaze access.

A pounding knock at the door startled him. The door opened, and his mom stuck her head in. "Sidney, why are you still in your pajamas? We have to get moving or..." She saw the half-assembled device on his desk. "Is that my new voxpod?!"

The doorbell rang and Sidney jumped up, relieved for the escape. "I'll

get it!" He squeezed past his mom and scrambled for the front door.

Sidney had a long history of taking apart household appliances. He deconstructed everything from his nanobot to the hoverboard that was his ninth birthday present. Successfully putting these objects back together was a different story. He couldn't help himself when he saw his mom's brand-new voxpod. He needed to open the deep red shell to see how it worked. Getting it back together—not so easy.

Now, Sidney activated the door monitor to see who had rung the bell.

A small metal claw rose into view. "Postal Service, delivery for Sidney Jamison."

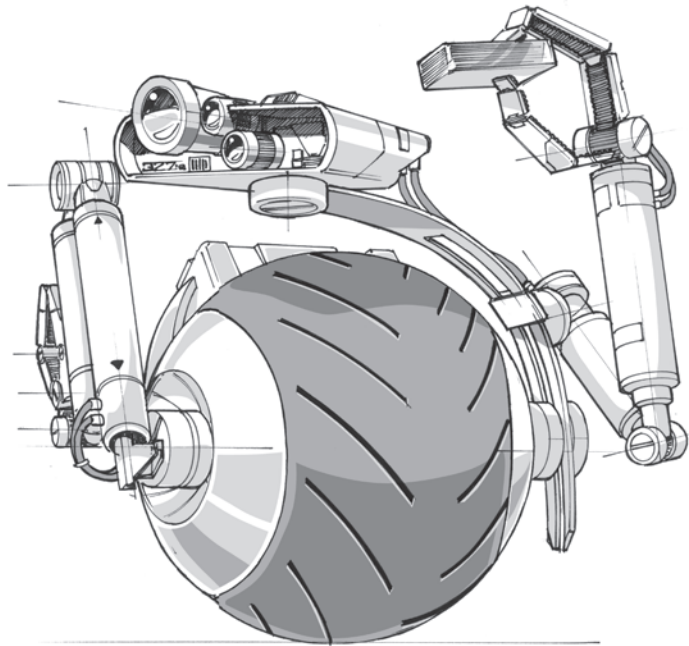
"For me?" Sid pulled open the door to see a delivery robot that was the height of his chest.

A claw reached up and handed a translucent package to Sid. With a whir, the robot rolled back to the street, speeding off to its next delivery.

It was a flat box, about the size of a deck of playing cards. The back flap was sealed with a foil sticker embossed with an icon of an atom and the shimmering words *DO NOT OPEN*.

Sid slid back into the house, still studying his delivery.

“Sidney, GET DRESSED!” His mom’s voice interrupted his thoughts. “We are leaving in five minutes!”



CHAPTER TWO



The Outburst

Sidney stared out the window as the hovercar’s autodrive carried them toward school. Sid’s mom was still simmering about the voxpod. “You know, Sidney, just because we can download the infoplans and have them replicated at home doesn’t make them cheap.”

“Aw, Mom. I just wanted to...”

“...see how it worked. I know.

We’ve had this conversation before.”

She sighed and switched gears.

“By the way, who was at the door this morning?”

“Just a digipack,” Sid said. “I didn’t open it yet. Probably some kind of datatrash.”

“Interesting,” his mom said. Sid didn’t see her grin as she changed the subject. “So, what’s going on at school today, kiddo?”

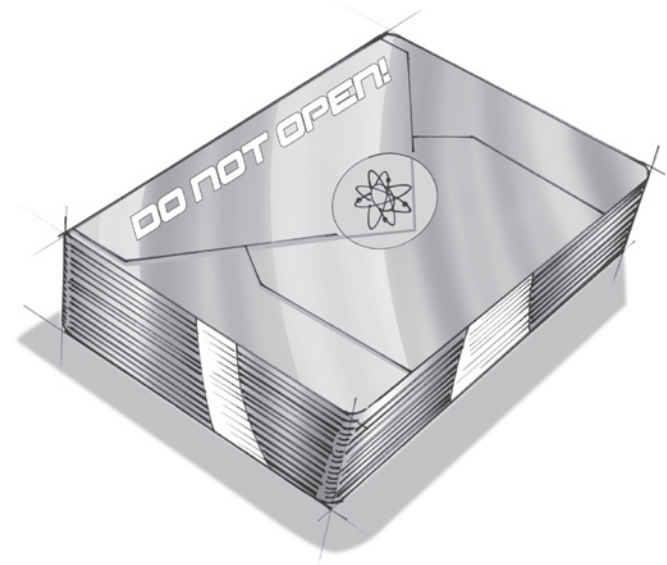
Sid rolled his eyes. “Every class is just repeating stuff we learned years ago, and no one else seems to notice. It’s like my brain is sinking in quicksand.”

“Well, try not to let your brain get totally sucked in. I have a feeling things will change,” his mom replied as they touched down at school.

Sidney followed the other students up the drab stone steps to the tarnished metal doors of Bleaker High School.

The school was as gray and weathered as the teachers. They all seemed to struggle to stay awake as they taught the same boring material to students each year, he thought.

The package continued to nag at Sid’s brain. *DO NOT OPEN!* it had said. *Weird*, he thought and felt the beginnings of the mental itch that came on whenever he was faced with a puzzle. He could barely keep himself from skipping class and sprinting home



to find out what it was.

By the time science class rolled around, Sidney wasn't paying attention. Ms. Dirge was an especially boring teacher.

"Please pay attention. I asked you to name the different stages of butterfly metamorphosis," she said sharply.

Sidney groaned, frustration boiling over.

"We've been studying it since first grade. Egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, adult! It's the same every year!"

Ms. Dirge looked at him as if he were crazy. But Sid noticed one or two kids who nodded to each other in agreement. Someone muttered, "Yeah, that's right," under his breath.

Encouraged, he continued. "We learned all that stuff a long time ago. Why can't we learn something totally lethal for a change?" His head was spinning with questions and ideas. Sid couldn't stop himself.

When he finally slowed down, he



noticed the other students were staring at him, open-mouthed—he usually never said two words in class. He didn't have a lot in common with the other kids, and this probably wasn't going to help, but Sidney didn't care. School had been boring for the last nine years, and he didn't think he could take another day of it.

Inside Principal Pritchard's office, a battered wooden desk contained an old computer with a monitor instead of a hologram display. He could hear the principal talking with Ms. Dirge outside. Their voices were muffled, but their frustrated tone was clear.

"Even after skipping a year, he's just not being challenged by the material."

Sid was just about to crack open the sonic pencil sharpener on the principal's desk to see how it worked. But he stopped short when he saw his mother's car touch down in the school parking lot. His mood sank lower.

CHAPTER THREE



Too Good to Be True?

Sidney knew he had screwed up royally as soon as he got in the car. Silence filled the hovercar for the first five minutes of the trip home.

"All right, Mom, just say it," Sid sighed.

"There's no excuse for an outburst like that," his mom lectured.

“Mom, you don’t understand! We’ve been learning the exact same stuff every year,” Sidney complained.

“Well, maybe someday you’ll be the teacher, and you’ll get to call the shots. Until then, you’re expected to do what the teacher tells you to do.”

Sid brooded, staring out the window and wishing he never had to see Ms. Dirge or any of his classmates again.

Fifteen minutes later, the car pulled into the driveway. As they stepped through the front door, Sid could smell the dinner Housemate was already cooking for them.

“Sidney, get started on your homework, please,” Ms. Jamison said.

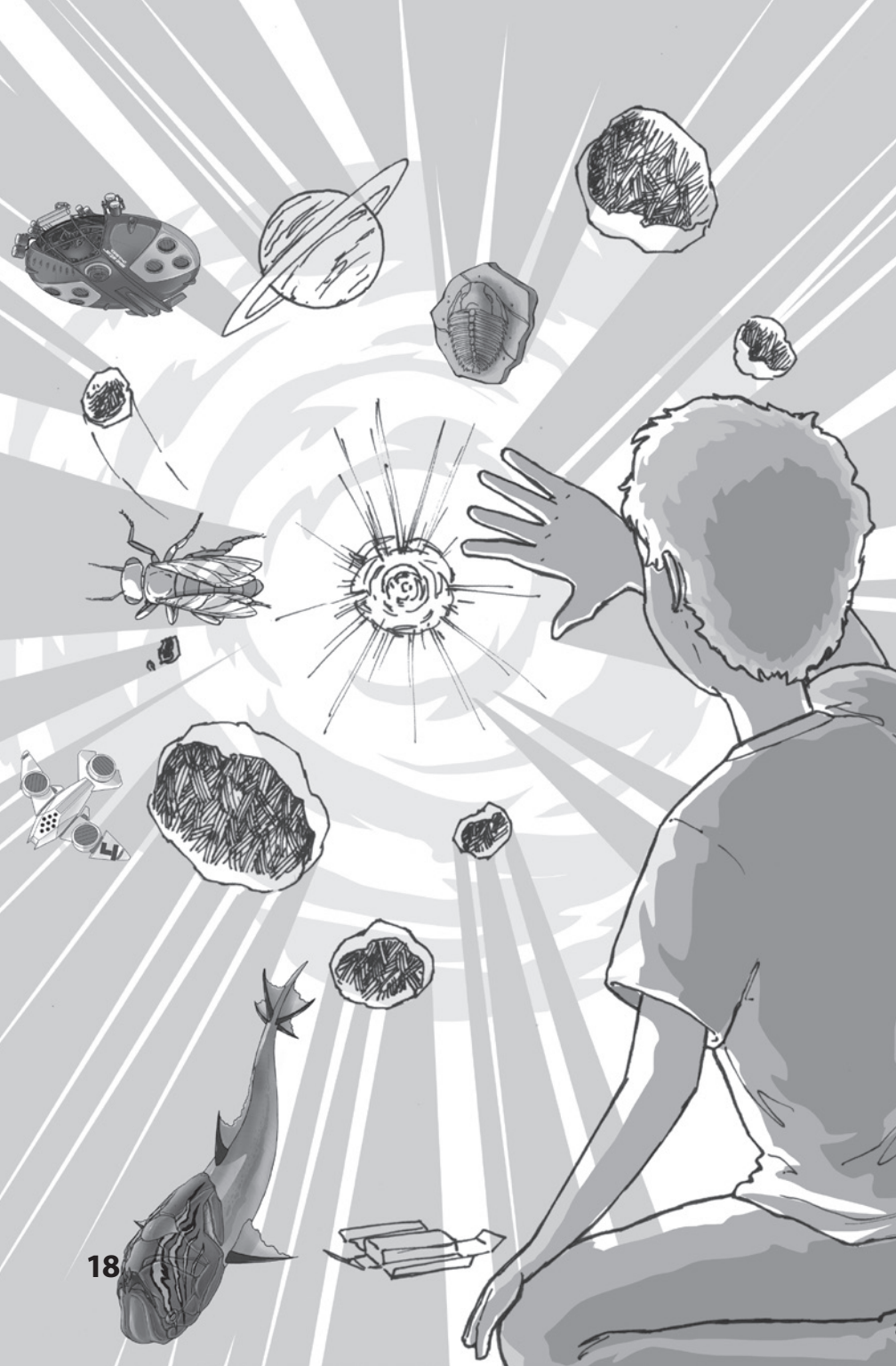
Sidney thought about protesting but decided he was already in enough trouble. As he cleared his desk, he caught sight of the digipack that had come in the mail. *DO NOT OPEN!* was printed on the face of it, yet it was sealed with nothing more than holotape.

It might as well say, ‘Open me right now,’ Sidney thought. Homework would have to wait a few minutes because his curiosity was at an epic level. He broke the seal on the back flap. Suddenly, the digipack lit up, getting brighter and brighter.

“Yikes!” Sid yelped, dropping the box on the floor.

A pinpoint of light formed above the floor, projected from the now-glowing digipack.

Sid stared at it, mesmerized, as the tiny light grew brighter. It exploded in a soundless blast that filled the room with light. Clouds of dust rushed past Sidney, swirling and expanding. Planets, fossils, animals, and technologies he had never seen before seemed to spin past him. Entire galaxies seemed to swirl and dissolve around him in. He knew that it was all a holographic projection, but it was more realistic than any he had ever seen.



“Whoa,” he breathed.

The extraordinary light show suddenly disappeared, and the little box on the floor was changing again. A light shot from the central building and spelled a greeting. “Welcome to Sci Hi,” it said.

The bedroom door swung open. “What’s happening in here, Sidney?” his mother asked.

“I don’t know, Mom...but it’s totally lethal, whatever it is!”

A powerful voice declared, “Congratulations, Sidney Lee Jamison! Only those who are curious and brave enough to open the invitation are offered a place at Sci Hi, the Universal High School for the Sciences.”

Brave enough? Sidney wondered.

The voice continued, “We have observed your talents for many years. Your inquisitive mind and passion for discovery will serve you well at Sci Hi. If you choose to accept this invitation, you will be tackling some of the largest

scientific problems the world has ever faced. This year's freshman class will travel to Japan and conduct a research project to investigate why there has been a serious decline in honeybee populations around the world. The *Hive Project* will help determine why the hives have been collapsing.

The choice is yours. If you decline, this message will be destroyed, and you will return to Bleaker High School tomorrow as usual. We hope that you decide to join the most creative and advanced minds on the planet.”

Suddenly, the light went out.

Sidney's head was spinning. He had heard rumors about Sci Hi, but he never thought it was a real place—nobody did. And if it did exist, he never would have expected he had a shot at actually being accepted there.

CHAPTER FOUR



Chance of a Lifetime

Sid glanced up at his mom, who was standing in the doorway, grinning. “What do you think?” she asked.

“But I didn't...I'm not...How do they even know who I am?” Sid stammered.

“I've seen how frustrated you've been with school, so I spoke with Ms. Dirge. She suggested Sci Hi.

We have to let them know if you're interested, so what should I tell them?"

Sid was still trying to wrap his mind around what was happening. "But Mom, it's gotta be crazy expensive!"

"Don't worry about that. If you want to go, I've got it figured out," his mother replied.

Sidney tried to remember the whispers he had heard about Sci Hi. Rumor has it that the school started as an international laboratory where scientists could meet, discuss their work with one another, and conduct groundbreaking research. Some people said the scientists there could control gravity—and even time. The faculty was said to be made up of the world's top scientists. And the students were rumored to be the best of the best.

"What do you say?" Sid's mom had out her freshly replicated voxpod, ready to call the school.

Still thunderstruck, Sid just looked at her and nodded.

She gave him a thumbs-up as she left the room to make the call.

Sidney grabbed his voxpod from his desk and laid down. He said, "Search subject: Sci Hi," and projected the results onto the ceiling. Sid gazed up at the intermaze results and tried to find out what was in store for him.



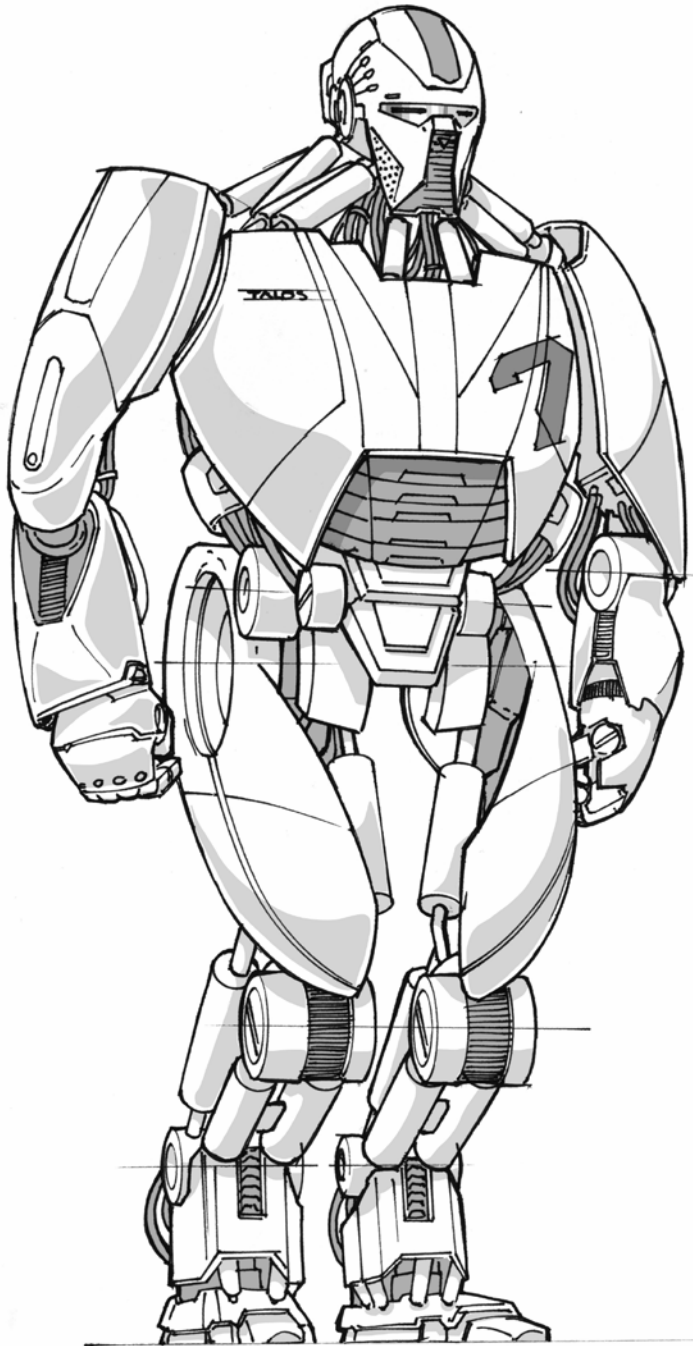
"What time is it?" Sidney asked. He couldn't wait for his ride to Sci Hi to arrive.

"Thirty-five seconds since the last time you asked," Housemate replied serenely.

"Very funny, House," Sid muttered.

He wondered how long his trip would be. He expected he would have to go from his house in Philadelphia to the airport, fly to California, and then probably make some stealthy connection from that airport out to the island where the school was located.

Interrupting his thoughts, a shadow fell over the house, caused by the



arrival of the Sci Hi retrieval unit. A stealth aircraft touched down lightly on the front lawn.

“Whoa,” Sid breathed. He had been expecting a taxi—not this futuristic thing. “Mom? I think my ride’s here.”

“Wow!” his mother said as she joined him in the living room. “Talk about traveling in style.”

Sid grabbed his duffel bag and headed for the front door.

The door to the aircraft opened. A large robot appeared in the doorway and climbed down to the ground.

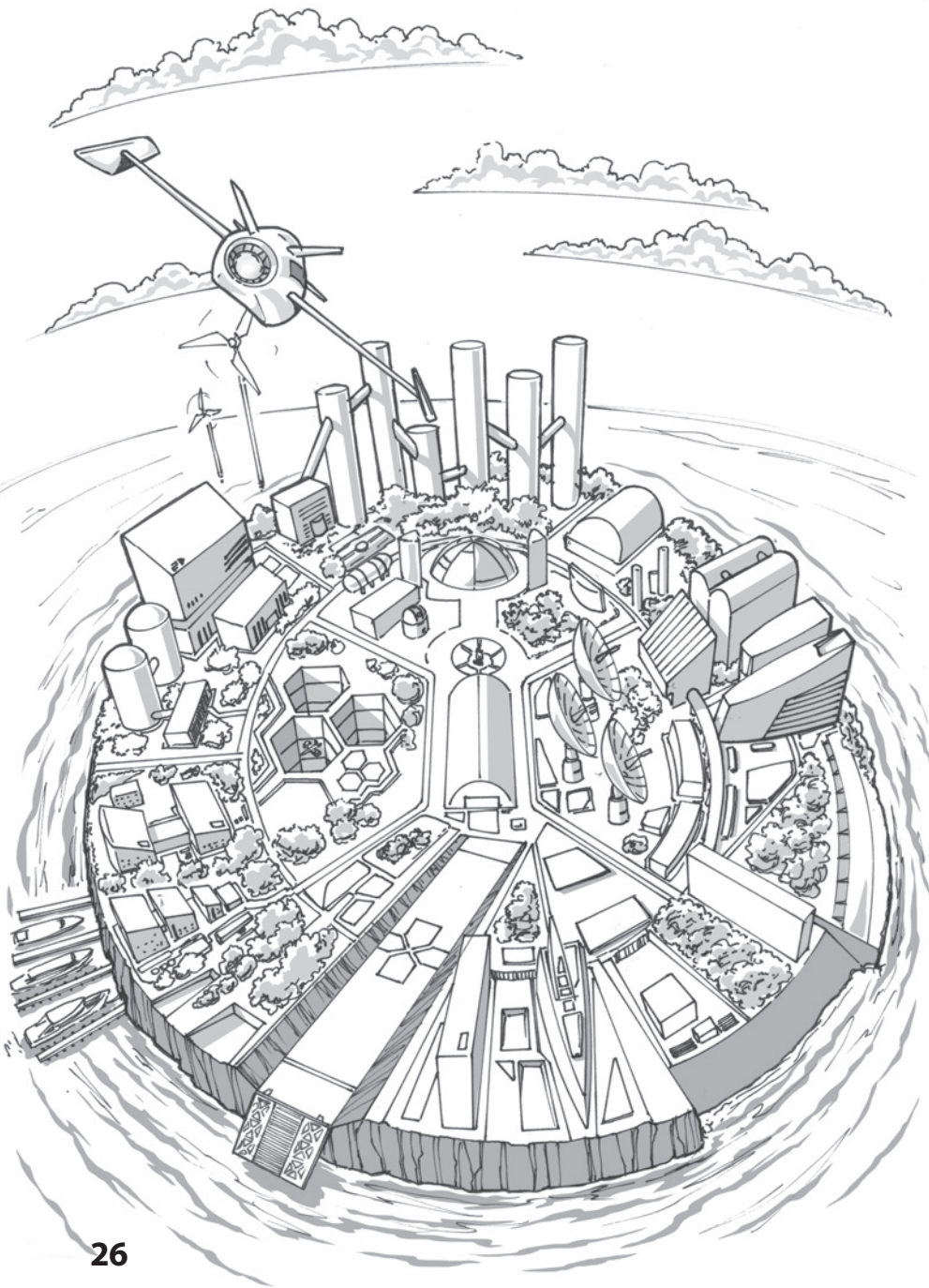
“Hello. My designation is Talos, one of the AIs assigned to Sci Hi.”

“Hello, um...Talos,” Sid’s mother said.

“What’s an AI?” Sid asked.

“I am an artificial form of intelligence, a nonliving, thinking machine created to assist the scientists and researchers at Sci Hi.”

Sidney hugged his mom goodbye and clambered up the steps.



CHAPTER FIVE



Adventure Begins

There were eight padded passenger seats, one of which was occupied by a boy who gave Sidney a nod as he entered. The boy looked about Sid's size. He had dark brown eyes, thick black hair, and light brown skin. He was dressed in a wrinkled plaid shirt with his sleeves rolled up to the elbows, utility

shorts, and thick-soled walking boots.

“Hi, I’m Sid,” he said, offering his hand.

“Hari,” the boy said, with a wide, friendly smile. “Nice to meet you.”

Sid buckled the safety belts and sat back. The vehicle immediately lifted off, shooting straight up into the air.

The intercom crackled to life. “This is Talos. We will land at Goddard Island in approximately 90 minutes.”

“How can we fly from the East Coast to the West Coast that fast?” Sid exclaimed.

“It only took me four hours to fly here from my home in India,” Hari explained.

The sky outside darkened from a deep-blue color to purple as they raced through the atmosphere.

Talos’s voice once again sounded from the intercom. “If you look over the left wing, you will see the man-made island named for Robert H. Goddard, the scientist who built the first liquid-fueled rocket.”



Sid looked at the island in awe as it came into view. Beaches softened the coastline, with green waves crashing on the sand. Clusters of sleek skyscrapers lined the interior of the island. In the center were the buildings that made up Sci Hi. Talos led them out of the hangar, up an escalator, and into the warm, breezy air outside.

“I’m happy that you both took the opportunity to attend Sci Hi,” a warm voice welcomed Sidney and Hari.

“The curriculum at Sci Hi will give you the chance to think in ways you haven’t before,” Dr. Marcon, the Sci Hi headmistress, said.

Hari and Sid were placed together in the Tesla dormitory. Their room was on the first floor, which had a large laboratory where students could work on projects together.

Sidney and Hari’s room was small but comfortable. Suddenly, they were interrupted by a brisk knock at the door.

“Hi, guys,” a cheerful voice said in a

British accent.

A smiling girl with brown skin and jet-black hair poked her head in the door.

“My name’s Penny Day, and I’m one of the assistant floor monitors. Sidney Jamison and Hari Gupta, right? Your class schedules are in the school brain, which is accessible on the wall screen.”

Penny brought up their schedules. “Looks like we will be in the same classes. We start with gym class tomorrow at 8:00am. We will be playing Zero-G Ball. It’s just like dodgeball, except for one thing—the ball. Later, in Introduction to Mutations, we will learn about how mutations might affect our hive project. Your voxpods are linked to the Sci Hi system so that you can reference them for anything you need,” Penny said. With that, she hustled off.

Sidney grinned. All he could say was, “This place is lethal.”



Continue the story in *Hive Mind*,
Part Two!

About Me

The Author

A lifelong sci-fi fan, Timothy J. Bradley is happy to bring the big, weird, and wild side of science fiction to a new generation. He lives with his wife and son in Southern California, where he can't help but wonder *What if...* every time he looks out the window.

The Illustrator

Timothy J. Bradley thinks of himself as an artist first. He thinks of his stories in images and movie clips—almost like puzzle pieces. Writing the story is a matter of putting the puzzle pieces together in the right order. He draws lots of sketches while he writes, and those usually become the start of the illustrations in his books.

Book Club Questions

1. Have you ever taken something apart that you couldn't put back together? What happened?
2. What clues in the text tell readers that the story takes place in the future?
3. What might a voxpod be used for?
4. If you saw a package that was clearly labeled *DO NOT OPEN!* would you open it? Explain your thinking.
5. Did Sidney handle his frustration in school well? What might you have done differently?
6. If you could be transferred to a special school like Sci Hi, what would you hope it was like?