

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

 [scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/mixed-files-mrs-basil-e-frankweiler-discussion-guide](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/mixed-files-mrs-basil-e-frankweiler-discussion-guide)

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. Why does Claudia pick Jamie to run away with? (*He has money saved up; has a transistor radio; she probably likes him the best.*)
2. How does Jamie get his money? (*He gambles when he plays cards with Bruce and always wins because he cheats.*)

HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

3. Why does Claudia enjoy planning? (*She's good at it; it enables her to use her love of details.*)
4. Why does Mrs. Frankweiler say that flattery is an important machine? (*It can make people do things —“move the world.”*) How does Claudia use this on Jamie? (*She says she wants him when she runs away.*)
5. How would you describe Claudia's escape plans? (*They are exact, details well thought out, thorough, “delicate.”*)
6. Why does Mrs. Frankweiler identify with Claudia? (*She seems to have had similar feelings and experiences.*)
7. Claudia sends in two coupons just as they leave home. What does that suggest about her future plans? (*She will return home.*)
8. “Often the search proves more profitable than the goal.” Why does Mrs. Frankweiler say this to her lawyer? (*Sometimes the experiences on the way to a goal are more important than the goal itself.*)
9. How do you think Mr. and Mrs. Kincaid felt when Claudia and Jamie ran away? (*worried, sad, scared, upset*)
10. How does the author get your attention in the first paragraph? (*She introduces Claudia who is unusual, different and is running away to the Metropolitan Museum.*)

LITERARY ELEMENTS

11. **Point-of-view:** Who is telling the story? (*Mrs. Frankweiler*) To whom is she telling it? (*her lawyer Saxonberg*)
12. **Plot development:** How does the *New York Times* article connect Claudia and Jamie to Mrs. Frankweiler? (*They saw the statue which had once been hers.*)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

13. Claudia thinks she is running away because of injustice. What's your opinion about Claudia's sense of

injustice?

14. Have you ever wanted to escape or run away from something you didn't like? Do you think Claudia and Jamie were fair to their family when they ran away?

15. How do you feel about the way Jamie wins in cards against Bruce? How do you think friends should treat one another?

16. What section of the museum would you have chosen to study?

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. How do experts determine the authenticity of an artwork? (*They gather evidence like sketches, diaries, sales records, and see what tools were used and how.*)

2. How do Claudia and Jamie get more money? (*They find it in the fountain when they take a bath there.*)

3. What is the name Jamie uses for the post office box? (*Angelo Michaels*) Why? (*It's based on Michelangelo; Jamie didn't want to use his own name.*)

4. Why don't Claudia and Jamie ask one of the children in the museum to deliver their letter to the office? (*The children are in Jamie's class from school.*)

HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

5. Why is the dust under a bed in the museum important to Claudia and Jamie? (*A dustless floor meant that it had been cleaned recently and wouldn't likely be cleaned again too soon. They could hide there.*)

6. What do you think Claudia was running away from? (*Possible: boredom, chores, lack of excitement and adventure, herself.*)

7. Why does Claudia say they'll take a "long, long bath" when they rent a post office box? (*In the fountain they can find more money to pay for the post office box which costs so much.*)

LITERARY ELEMENTS

8. **Point-of view:** How does the author remind readers that this story is being told by Mrs. Frankweiler? (*She addresses Saxonberg directly every once in awhile, using the pronoun "I."*)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

9. Claudia and Jamie talk about homesickness. Have you ever been homesick? How would you define it?

10. Claudia says, "When you hug someone, you learn something else about them. An important something else." What do you think she means?

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. Why is the letter from the museum a disappointment? (*It says that the museum already knew about the clue.*)
2. How does Claudia keep Jamie from going home? (*She says they should go to Farmington to see Mrs. Frankweiler.*)
3. Why doesn't Claudia want to tell Mrs. Frankweiler where they were hiding? (*She wants to use the information as a bargaining tool to find out about the angel. She's also reluctant to part with a secret.*)
4. Why are Mrs. Frankweiler's files mixed up? (*She likes secrets.*)

HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

5. Why does Jamie suggest that they go home after they get the museum's letter? (*Maybe he is ready. He doesn't think they will learn the secret of the statue.*) Why does Claudia want to stay? (*She wants to be a heroine—into find out about the statue.*)
6. Why do Mrs. Frankweiler and the children get along so well? (*They are all spirited, independent, a little different, and like similar things such as cards and secrets.*)
7. Mrs. Frankweiler says, "When the stakes are high, I never cheat. I consider myself too important to do that." What does she mean? (*Cheating then would erode her self esteem.*)
8. How does Mrs. Frankweiler help both Claudia and Jamie get something they want? (*She helps Jamie because the sketch is worth a lot of money, something he cares about. She helps Claudia because it is a secret and helps her to be "different."*)

LITERARY ELEMENTS

9. **Foreshadowing:** How does the author foreshadow the file that holds Mrs. Frankweiler's secret? (*Jamie says "boloney" all the time; the file is under Bologna.*)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

10. Is Mrs. Frankweiler the way you expected she would be? Why or why not?
11. Claudia says you should learn something new every day. Mrs. Frankweiler says that some days you should learn a lot, but on others you should let "what is already in you to swell up inside you until it touches everything." Which idea do you agree with and why?
12. Why isn't a secret much fun if no one knows you have it?

- Subjects:

Changes and New Experiences, Cleverness, Cooperation and Teamwork, Main Idea and Details, Cause and Effect, Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences, Literary Devices, Plot, Character, Setting, Story Elements, Reading Response, Expository Writing, Literary Response, Creativity and Imagination, Curiosity, Determination and Perseverance, Siblings, Running Away, Survival

- Skills:

Literary Elements, Cause and Effect, Drawing Conclusions, Main Idea and Details, Plot, Character and Setting, Point of View, Expository Writing

