

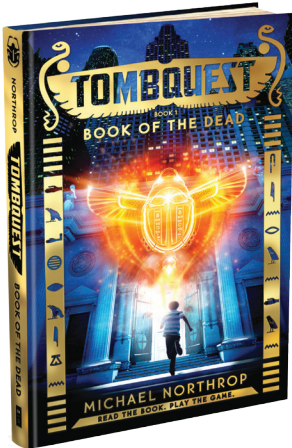
TOMBQUEST

Grades 3–6

MEETS
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS

TombQuest Book 1: Book of the Dead

BY Michael Northrop



ABOUT THE BOOKS: An ancient Egyptian evil has awakened and Alex and his best friend Ren must lay it to rest . . . before the afterlife comes for everyone.

ABOUT THE GAME: Readers explore ancient Egyptian mythology as they build tombs, fill them with traps and treasure, and challenge their friends to break in!

EDUCATIONAL CONNECTIONS: From deciphering secret hieroglyph messages hidden in the books to learning about artifacts such as the Book of the Dead, students dive into the fascinating world of ancient Egypt.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES: Get more educator resources at Scholastic.com/TombQuest

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Northrop has written short fiction for *Weird Tales*, the *Notre Dame Review*, and *McSweeney's*. His debut novel, *Gentlemen*, earned him a PW Flying Start, and his YA thriller, *Trapped*, was published in 2011 to great acclaim. An editor at *Sports Illustrated Kids* for many years, he now writes full-time from his home in New York City. You can visit him online at www.michaelnorthrop.net.



Photo Credit: Ken Karp

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of the prologue? Foreshadowing is a literary device that gives a hint about what's to come in a story. What does the prologue foreshadow? At what point in the story does the reader gain a true understanding of the power of the secret organization that is discussed in the prologue? Who is the leader of the organization?
2. Explain the opening sentence of chapter 1 – A Deadly Secret: “Alex Sennefer was about to die for the first time” (p. 5). How does Alex’s mother bring him back to life? Might her powers also be responsible for his illness? What does she sacrifice by saving his life?
3. Alex’s mother often tells him about exhibits she curates at the Metropolitan Museum. Why is she so secretive about the new exhibit and the trips she’s been taking? When does Alex notice that something has changed with his mother? Identify instances in which she thinks that keeping him in the dark will protect him. How is she right or wrong?
4. Describe Alex and Ren’s friendship. Why does Alex refuse to call her by her nickname? What does this say about their relationship? Create your own nicknames for Alex and Ren at the end of the novel.
5. Fear is a theme in the novel. Trace this theme by choosing quotations that demonstrate Alex’s fears throughout the novel. Why doesn’t Ren understand Alex’s fear when they first see the Book of the Dead? When does she begin to share his fear? Using evidence from the text, identify what allows Alex to overcome his fear.
6. What do you think Dr. Todtman knows about Alex’s father that Alex doesn’t know? Why is Maggie Bauer nervous about her son talking to Dr. Todtman?
7. Why doesn’t Dr. Todtman want Ren involved in the quest? What does Ren offer to the adventure that Alex can’t? Debate whether Dr. Todtman grows to respect Ren’s contribution.

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8. What are the similarities between the Book of the Dead, the Stung Man, the Lost Spells, the awakened mummy, and Dr. Todtman and Alex's mom's amulets?
9. Discuss what Dr. Todtman means: "Wearing the scarab comes with responsibilities, including the choice" (p. 159). What is the choice? Debate whether Dr. Bauer used the scarab responsibly.
10. Why does the Stung Man accuse Alex of treachery? How does Dr. Todtman control the construction workers? Explain how this clarifies what the doctor told the kids, "A watcher can also be a boss, an overseer."
11. Why doesn't Dr. Bauer want Ren's father to see the "guilt and panic that she was feeling" about the weird happenings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in other museums around the world? Discuss what she means. What is the difference in how scientists and historians in this book deal with mysteries?
12. Identify why the Lost Spells and Alex are so important to Al-Dab'u. How do Al-Dab'u and Dr. Todtman know one another? Explain why this confuses Alex and Ren.
13. Why does Dr. Todtman believe that Alex's mother left her amulet for Alex and how did she think he could use it? What is the significance of Dr. Todtman's amulet falcon? Why is Dr. Bauer's scarab more powerful?
14. Figurative language can evoke emotions and images. Discuss what the following simile makes you feel and what it makes you think of: "A withered hand flashed across his vision like a cobra striking" (p. 58). Find other examples of figurative language in the novel and discuss the images and emotions these examples create.
15. Man against man, man against nature, and man against self are basic conflicts in literature. How is each of these conflicts central to the Book of the Dead? In a group, choose one conflict to defend with evidence from the text and debate against other groups.
16. The Book of the Dead might be classed as adventure, fantasy, horror, or mystery. In small groups, explore how the novel fits one of these genres. Use specific scenes and quotes from the novel to support the argument.
17. Discuss the purpose of the epilogue. How does it set the stage for Book 2? Make a prediction about what Alex and Ren may find in London.

Use This Guide to Teach to the Following Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL. 4-7.1 – Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL. 4-7.2 – Determine a theme of a story from details in the text.

RL. 4-7.3 – Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story, drawing on specific details in the text.

Reading Literature

Craft & Structure

RL. 5-7.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

RL. 5-7.5 – Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L. 4-7.1 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Knowledge of Language

L. 4-7.3 – Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension & Collaboration

SL. 4-7.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing one's own clearly.

SL. 4-7.3 – Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

SL. 4-7.6 – Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English and situations where informal discourse is appropriate.

Discussion guide written by Pat Scales, Children's Literature Consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.



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