

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO
THE MAGIC TRAP
BY JACQUELINE DAVIES



Praise for The Magic Trap

“The series’ many fans won’t want to miss this one.”
—*Booklist*

★ “Action and humor make the hard lessons go down easy.”
—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

About the Book

Jessie and Evan Treski have waged a lemonade war, sought justice in a class trial, unmasked a bell thief, and stood at opposite ends over the right to keep secrets. Now they are creating a magic show—a professional magic show—in their own backyard! They practice, they study, and they practice some more. And who shows up? Their father, who has done such a good job of disappearing himself over the past few years.

Just as Evan and Jessie took on running a business in *The Lemonade War* and a court of law in *The Lemonade Crime*, in this fifth novel of the best-selling

Lemonade War series, they take on the challenges of magic and illusion all while discovering some hidden truths about their own family. Another fresh, funny, emotionally charged novel by the author whom *Books for Kids* calls “one of the best writers for the middle grades around.”

Common themes of family, determination, loyalty, preparedness, goals, talents, and traditions run throughout the story. Use the following discussion questions, which fully support teaching to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, to foster a deeper understanding of the novel (see last page for complementary standards).

About the Author

Jacqueline Davies is the talented author of several novels and picture books, including the Lemonade War series and *The Boy Who Drew Birds*. Ms. Davies lives in Needham, Massachusetts, with her family. Visit her website at www.jacquelinedavies.net.

Discussion Questions

Compare and contrast *The Magic Trap* to another book in the Lemonade War series. What makes the books alike? What makes the books different? Create a Venn diagram to illustrate your findings. (For a graphic organizer in Venn diagram form, visit www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf.)

When Mrs. Treski goes to San Francisco, she is both following her motto of “Family comes first,” and going against it. How is she following her motto and how is she not? List three reasons she doesn’t want to go to San Francisco and three reasons that she does. On page 235, Mrs. Treski apologizes to Jessie and Evan for going on the trip. She says, “I never should have left you.” Evan disagrees. What do you think?

On page 61, Jessie identifies a statement of her dad’s as *hyperbole*. (Jessie learned about hyperbole in

chapter 17 of *The Candy Smash*. (see p. 224 of that book for a definition and example of *hyperbole*.)

What is the statement? Why does her dad say what he does? Why do people use hyperbole? How is it different from lying? Make up a sentence that is an example of hyperbole.

Why does Jessie want to be Evan's assistant in the magic show? Do you think these are good reasons? Why or why not? Which reason do you think is the best and why? Would you want to be a magician's assistant? Why or why not?

Mr. Treski accused Evan of not being tough, and said that Evan has to "learn how to handle the rough stuff" [p. 138]. Why do you think Mr. Treski says this to Evan? What are some examples of toughness that Mr. Treski gives when he talks about children in other parts of the world [p. 57]? List three examples from the book that show Evan's toughness.

Jessie and Evan are often confused about their feelings for their father, because sometimes he seems like the greatest dad in the world and sometimes he doesn't. List three things that Mr. Treski does that make Jessie and Evan feel special and loved. List three things he does that make Jessie and Evan feel unimportant or hurt. Is Mr. Treski a good dad or a bad dad? What advice would you give Evan about his relationship with his father?

What does the Climbing Tree mean to Evan? What is the significance of it breaking during the storm? Is there something in your life (a place, a person, an object) that means to you what the Climbing Tree means to Evan?

What does Jessie mean when she says she's doing her Feeling Check [p. 169]? Do you ever have trouble figuring out how you're feeling at a particular moment? What feelings are the hardest to identify? What do you do to help you figure out what you're feeling?

Jessie does her Feeling Check right after her father leaves. She paints a picture in her mind. What is the image that comes to her mind? How do you think that picture connects to how she's feeling? If you were to give a name to the feeling Jessie has after her father leaves, what would it be and why do you think she feels this way?

In *The 4-O Forum*, Jessie includes a list of "What You Need in an Emergency" [p. 177]. How many of the things on the list do you have in your house? What does "non-perishable" mean? If you needed to gather a three-day supply of non-perishable food, what would you collect? What is the grossest non-perishable food you can imagine eating?

Jessie doesn't like animals [p. 79]. List three reasons why. However, Jessie loves Professor Hoffman [p. 196]. Why? Are there some animals you like and others you don't? What are the differences between these two groups of animals? In general, why do we find some animals more "lovable" than others?

Foreshadowing is a literary device by which the author hints at something that is going to happen later in the story. Give an example of foreshadowing from *The Magic Trap*.

Classroom Activities

Math

On page 18, Jessie offers to loan Evan twenty dollars if he pays her *interest*. What is interest? How much interest does Jessie plan to charge Evan for the loan? Write an equation that will help you calculate the interest over time. Create a graph that shows how the interest grows over time. If it takes Evan three months to pay Jessie back the original amount of the loan (known as the *principal*), how much interest will he have to pay her? How long would it take for Jessie to double her investment (that is, how long before Evan owes her twenty dollars in principal and twenty dollars in interest)? Would you take a loan from Jessie? Why or why not?

Position a thermometer outside the school and take a temperature reading every day possible for one month at the same time each day. Graph the daily temperature readings over time. What do you notice? Choose one temperature reading and look up the record high and low for that month in your area. (Visit www.weather.com, type in your town, and then click on the "monthly" tab for information on record highs and lows for the month.) What is the difference between the all-time record high and low? What is the highest temperature you recorded for the month and what is the lowest? What is the

difference between the two? What was the average temperature for the month and what was the mean temperature?

Science

Visit Weather WizKids (www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-forecasting.htm) or another weather-related website to research weather forecasting. The kids in 4-O have a weather station that uses five instruments to collect data on the weather. What are the five instruments? What does each instrument do? A meteorologist is someone who studies the weather. How do weather instruments help meteorologists predict the weather?

Can you find today's hottest place on earth and the coldest place on earth? The windiest? The wettest? Find each location on a map. What do you notice about these extreme weather locales?

Hurricane Annabelle is a Category 1 hurricane. Do some research on hurricanes and then answer these questions: How many categories of hurricanes are there? What are the characteristics of each category? (Two websites to visit: Weather WizKids www.weatherwizkids.com and the National Weather Service's Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov) Have you ever lived through a hurricane? If so, what was it like and how did it make you feel?

Social Studies

A poster in Mrs. Treski's laundry room reads, "Keep Calm and Carry On." This is a replica of a propaganda poster issued by the British government during World War II to help the people of Great Britain endure the war. (For background on World War II, consider sharing one of the following picture books: *The Cats of Krasinski Square* by Karen Hesse; *One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of World War II* by Lita Judge; *The Secret Seder* by Doreen Rappaport; *Pennies in a Jar* by Dori Chaconas.) Watch the brief video that explains the history behind this poster: [youtube.com/watch?v=FrHkKXFRbCI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrHkKXFRbCI); also posted on jacquelineDavies.net. What does it mean to "carry on"? Why do you think the words on the poster might help someone through a difficult time? Do you think the poster offers good advice? Create a poster that might help in wartime.

There are several illustrations of postage stamps from other countries in *The Magic Trap* [p. 6 and p. 123]. What country is each postage stamp from? Find each country on a map. Type "postage stamps" into Google Images to see many different kinds of stamps from all over the world. Which stamp is your favorite? Why? What do you think makes a good postage stamp? Choose a country (or make up an imaginary country) and make a postage stamp for it.

Language Arts

Jessie and Evan learn about *personification* in Chapter 3 of *The Candy Smash*. (Look at p. 23 in *The Candy Smash* for a definition and example of personification.). Is there an object in *The Magic Trap* that is personified? [p. 187] How does personification strengthen a description? How does it make the reader feel about the object that is personified? Choose an everyday object and write a short paragraph in which you use personification to describe that object.

There are several mottos mentioned in *The Magic Trap*: "Family comes first" [p. 28]; "Be kind and do your work" [p. 138]; "Keep calm and carry on" [p. 175]. What is a motto? What purpose does it serve? If you were to write a motto for your family, what might it be? What if you wrote a motto for your classroom? Choose one of your mottos and make a poster that will inspire others to follow it.

Common Core Connections

This guide meets the following Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

Discussion Points

Reading Literature:

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 3—RL.3.1-3
Grade 4—RL.4.1-3
Grade 5—RL.5.1-3
Grade 6—RL.6.1-3
Grade 7—RL.7.1-3

Craft and Structure

Grade 3—RL.3.4-6
Grade 4—RL.4.4-6
Grade 5—RL.5.4-6
Grade 6—RL.6.4-6
Grade 7—RL.7.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4—RL.4.7, 9
Grade 5—RL.5.9
Grade 6—RL.6.9
Grade 7—RL.7.9

Range of Reading Level of Text Complexity

Grade 3—RL.3.10
Grade 4—RL.4.10
Grade 5—RL.5.10

Text Types and Purposes

Grade 3—W.3.1-3a
Grade 4—W.4.1-3e
Grade 5—W.5.1-3e
Grade 6—W.6.1-3.e
Grade 7—W.7.1-1c, 2-2d, 3-3e

Production and Distribution of Writing

Grade 3—W.3.4-6
Grade 4—W.4.4-6
Grade 5—W.5.4-6
Grade 6—W.6.4-6
Grade 7—W.7.4-6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Grade 3—W.3.7-8
Grade 4—W.4.7-9b
Grade 5—W.5.7-9b
Grade 6—W.6.7-9
Grade 7—W.7.7-9a

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

Grade 3—SL.3.1-4
Grade 4—SL.4.1-2
Grade 5—SL.5.1-1d
Grade 6—SL.6.1-2
Grade 7—SL.7.1

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4—SL.4.4-6
Grade 5—SL.5.4-6
Grade 6—SL.6.4-6
Grade 7—SL.7.4-6

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