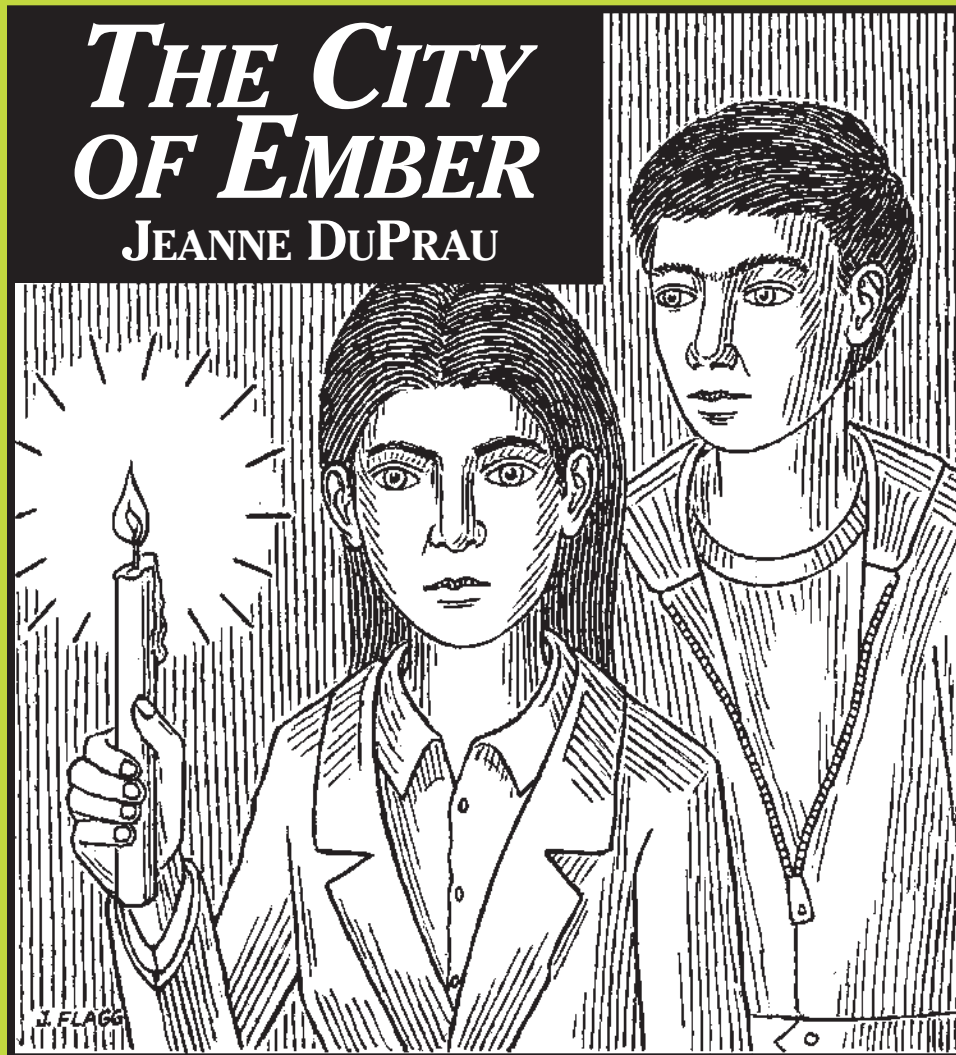


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *The City of Ember* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Science Fiction

Science fiction is narrative based on the application of elements of science and technology to imaginary situations. It can be set in the future, the past, or another dimension. Common subjects for science fiction include space travel, invasions from space, time travel, and future societies.

The beginnings of science fiction lie in the tales of such European authors as Mary Shelly, Jules Verne, and H.G. Wells. Shelly's publication of *Frankenstein* in 1818 is considered by some to be the first science fiction novel. Verne is credited with refining the genre during the 1860s in such works as *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Wells, one of Verne's most successful imitators, wrote such famous novels as *The Time Machine*, which was published in 1895.

In the United States, the roots of science fiction can be found in the supernatural works of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ambrose Bierce in the mid to late 1800s. By the turn of the century, the audience for science fiction had greatly increased, perhaps because of the fascination with the boom in technology. As a distinct category, science fiction came into its own in April 1926 with the publication of Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted solely to science fiction. One of the most prominent of today's science fiction awards, the Hugo, bears his name.

The next important influence on the genre was John Wood Campbell, who was hired in 1937 as editor of *Astounding Stories*, a famous science fiction magazine in which such noted authors as Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein published some of their works. Campbell's insistence on high literary standards contributed to the reputation of the genre.

After World War II, science fiction began to change; there was more of an emphasis on detailed, accurate descriptions of scientific devices and processes. There was also more concern with how scientific change would affect our society. The genre became more respectable, and science fiction books joined the ranks of science fiction magazines. Established science fiction writers such as Robert Heinlein, Ursula LeGuin, and Ray Bradbury began writing quality science fiction for young adults. They were joined by authors writing primarily for this audience, such as Andre Norton, Madeleine L'Engle, Virginia Hamilton, and John Christopher.

From the 1950s to the present, science fiction has greatly expanded its outlets and readership. Science fiction continues its popularity in films, television shows, and science fiction clubs as well as books.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the picture on the cover. What do you think this book will be about? Will it be serious or humorous? When and where does it take place?
2. Look at the map of the city of Ember at the beginning of the novel. Where is the subterranean river? What lies beyond the beehives and greenhouses? As you read, trace the action of the story on the map.
3. Read the Background Information on Science Fiction that you will find on page three of this study guide. What do you think are the most important elements of a work of science fiction? Use a chart, such as the one below, to list the most important elements of a science fiction story. As you read, record examples of these elements and the pages on which you find them.

Elements of Science Fiction	Page Number	<i>The City of Ember</i>

4. Do some research to find biographical information about Jeanne DuPrau, the author of this novel. Learn about her professional life and family life. What do you think was the inspiration for *The City of Ember*?
5. Imagine that you can get into a time machine and travel hundreds of years into the future. What do you think you would see? Would things be better or worse than they are now?
6. What, if any, are valid reasons for a leader to limit the freedoms and rights of citizens? What dangers can this lead to? Give examples from history to support your response.
7. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** In a small cooperative learning group, discuss environmental and political issues that threaten our world today. What might result if these issues are not resolved? Compare your conclusions with those of other groups.
8. Read the Background Information on electricity on page four of this study guide. How do you think daily life would be changed if electricity was only available for one hour each day?