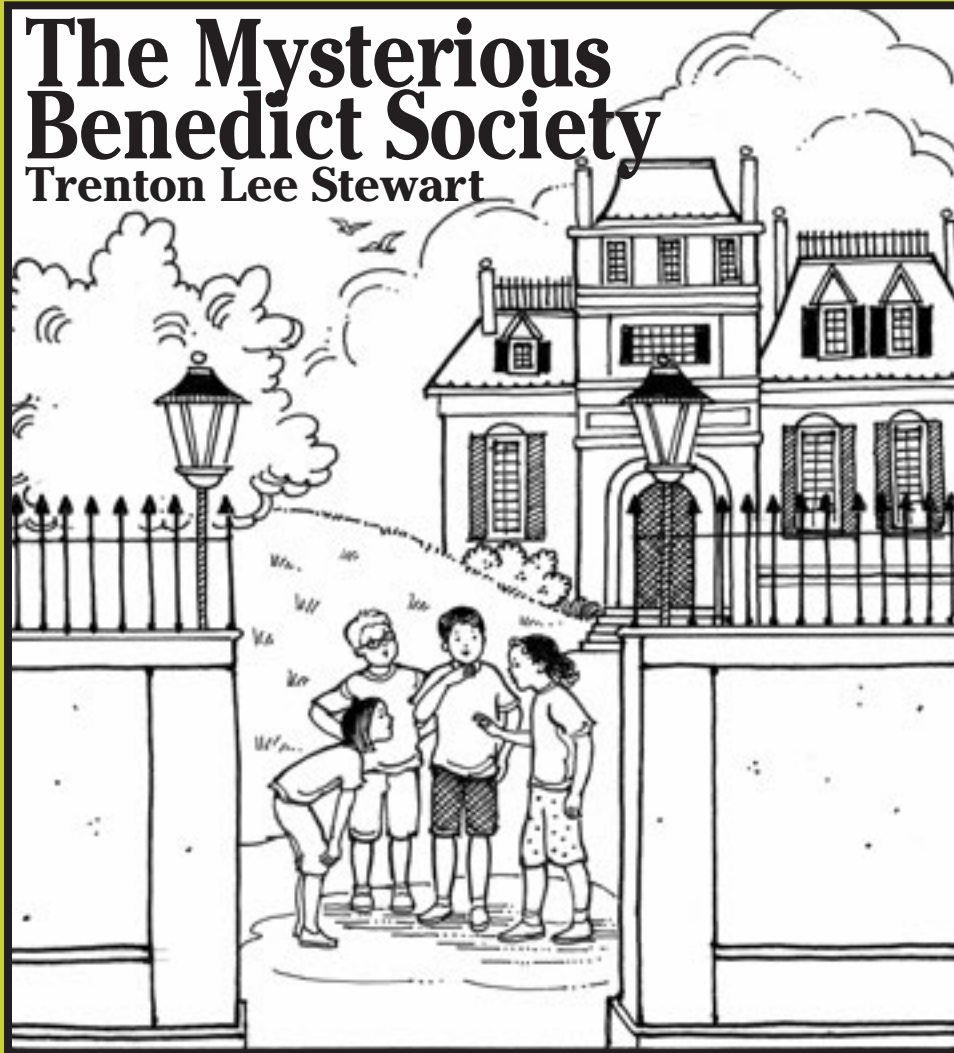


Novel•Ties

The Mysterious Benedict Society

Trenton Lee Stewart



A Study Guide

Written By Carol Alexander

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *The Mysterious Benedict Society* 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 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.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustrations on the cover and throughout the chapters. What do you think the book is about? Where and when do you think it might take place? Do you think it will be serious, or humorous, or both?
2. Read the Background Information about futuristic novels on page two of this study guide. As you read this book, notice how fears about the growing role of technology influence the plot.
3. In this novel, children without families form strong bonds with other children and adults. Have you read any other books or stories about young people who have lost or become separated from their parents? Jot down whatever you can remember about these stories. When you finish reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, compare the facts and observations in your notes to those you discovered while reading the book.
4. In this book, Mr. Curtain sends subliminal messages into the minds of people he wishes to control. Do some research on the history of subliminal messages to learn whether they are effective, where they might appear in our world, and what might be done to reduce their influence.
5. **Science Connection:** Do some research to learn about media broadcasting. Find information about the science of electronic transmission. You might write a description of this process and publish it in the student newspaper.
6. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** In this novel, a dangerous group spreads propaganda, information presented in a biased form. Organizations that employ propaganda try to make people think or act in a certain way. With a small group of classmates, make a list of ways propaganda is used today. Collect news articles and advertisements that contain propaganda. For each item, discuss how facts may be twisted to persuade people to follow a certain course or accept an idea as true.
7. **Pair/Share:** Work with a partner to discuss whether advancements in technology are always good for humanity. Under what circumstances might technology actually be dangerous? Record your conclusions and compare them to those of other pairs in your class.
8. **Pair/Share:** This novel explores the conflict between freedom of thought and the pressure to conform or adapt to a social structure. Make a list of the conflicts that could arise between a person and an institution, such as school or a government. Exchange lists with a partner. Discuss ways in which each of these conflicts might be settled. Are there some conflicts that simply cannot be solved?
9. Read the statements in the Anticipation Guide on page four of this study guide. In the "You" column, place a check [✓] next to each statement with which you agree. When you finish the story, place a check next to each statement with which you think the author would agree.

PENCILS, ERASERS, AND DISQUALIFICATION; SPECTACLES AND BUCKETS; SQUARES AND ARROWS [Little, Brown and Company paperback edition pp. 1 – 65]

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. deviate | a. threatening; suggesting evil or harm |
| 2. solitude | b. sadness; lowness of spirits |
| 3. dejection | c. entertain |
| 4. perplexed | d. made fearful |
| 5. reluctantly | e. turn aside |
| 6. ominous | f. state of being alone |
| 7. regale | g. puzzled or confused |
| 8. intimidated | h. unwillingly; with hesitation |

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- After reaching the middle of the maze, I stopped, feeling completely _____ about which way to go.
- City dwellers sometimes welcome the peace and _____ of the countryside.
- Hopping down from the bus, my little sister immediately began to _____ me with the story of her class trip.
- When we lost our dog, the whole family was in a state of _____.
- Kai _____ closed his adventure novel when his mother announced it was bedtime.
- The _____ storm clouds drove visitors away from the park to shelter.
- Once the commander had set his battle plan, he refused to _____ from this course of action.
- While most children were _____ by the neighborhood bully, Rita easily found ways to outwit him.

Read to find out how three children pass a very strange set of tests.