



This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Literature, Writing, Language, Speaking and Listening. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level-specific Common Core State Standards.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

This guide is aligned with the 9-10 standards for literature. If you teach another grade, you may want to visit the Common Core website and find a similar standard in the same strand.

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2:* Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. • *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3:* Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5:* Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. • *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A:* Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. • *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C:* Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

ABOUT THE BOOK

In the peaceful realm of Tequende, all second-born children at the age of fifteen must journey to the Alcazar to fulfill the mandate of the Oath of Guilds. There they train to earn a place among the Queen's guard, or work as indentured servants.

For Sun Guilder Talimendra of the Magda River Traders, joining the Second Guard will not only bring honor to her family; it will be a chance to uphold her mother's legacy. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears will be spent to bear the weight of this prestigious title, and Tali is prepared to make that sacrifice even as she competes against hundreds of other pledges.

But the Queen's guard may hold a secret Tali isn't quite ready for: a conspiracy that threatens to drag Tequende into all-out war. And the enemy is close.

There is very little time and too many unanswered questions, but one thing is for certain: if there is a traitor among the Second Guard, then everyone—including the Queen—is in grave danger.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

J. D. VAUGHN is the pen name of Julia Durango and Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, two friends who are also writing partners. Julia is a former school librarian from Illinois and winner of the Golden Kite Award. Tracie, a high school English teacher from Ohio, has also received critical acclaim for her writing, including the Schneider Family Book Award. Together they share a love of travel, reading, chicken biscuits, and the teenagers who call them Mom.



Julia Durango and Tracie Vaughn Zimmer

PRE-READING ACTIVITY: PRIMING COMPREHENSION

Have students mark their opinion of the following statements. Then place posters around the four corners of your room that correspond with the rankings, and discuss the answers as a class, allowing students to move among their answers. Students love the chance to stand and visually see their peers' responses.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	WHY I think this
I would rather be a soldier than a servant.					
Courage is seeking the truth no matter the cost.					
Friends can be as important as family.					
Sometimes the only way to keep an oath is to break it.					
Families pass on traditions and bias in equal measure to their children.					

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Good readers make predictions about a book before beginning it, and as they read the book, they continue to construct the world in their minds.

BEFORE READING

Study the cover and read the description on the back of the book. Make ten predictions about what you think will happen as the story unfolds. Keep the list and see what does and does not happen. Remember, just making predictions improves your comprehension; it doesn't matter if any of them are correct. It's actually more fun when you're completely off base—who really wants to know how a book ends, after all?

READ “THE LEGEND OF THE SECOND GUARD” (PREFACE)

In small groups or pairs answer these questions:

- What was happening to the tribes surrounding Tequende?
- Why were these great civilizations falling?
- Where did Queen Four seek answers?
- Summarize the advice of the Diosa to the Queen.

Then, make a list of at least five new predictions about the plot of the novel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How would you describe Tali? Do you think you would be friends with her or not? Why?
- 2 Does Tali see her service to the realm as a sacrifice or an honor?
- 3 Would you like to see Tequende for yourself? How do you imagine it?
- 4 How do you know if a character like Zarif will be important in a story? What are his key characteristics?
- 5 Have you ever had an awkward encounter, as Tali did with Brindl on their first meeting? Are these inevitable in life or are they avoidable?

- 6 Explain why it is difficult for the pledges of the Second Guard to shed their loyalty to their original guilds. Is there anything similar in your own upbringing?
- 7 Which guild appeals most to you? Why? Are the guilds equal in Tequende? Is true equality possible in any human society? What makes you believe this?
- 8 Which of the centurios (instructors/leaders) do you find most impressive? Why? Compare and contrast their leadership and instructional styles.
- 9 Who are Tali's allies and enemies? In fiction, what characteristics make the best of both of these types of characters?
- 10 Tali is conflicted by two opposing forces: her loyalty to her family and guild and loyalty to her realm and Queen. How do these conflicts affect her decisions? Which alliance pulls her the strongest? How is loyalty developed in a person? To what or whom are you most loyal? Why?
- 11 Describe Tali's relationship with her sister and father. How would you characterize it? How much influence do siblings have in people's lives? Your own?
- 12 Cite evidence that leads Tali to believe that there is corruption inside Tequende. Put a star next to the piece of evidence that you find most compelling. Be prepared to defend your choice.
- 13 What mistakes does Tali make as she tries to uncover the truth about her realm? Are we, as people, more defined by our mistakes or by our successes? Why?
- 14 There is a large cast of minor characters in the novel. Who is your favorite? Why?
- 15 If you had to make an alliance with Tali, Zarif, or Chey, who would you most want beside you? Why?

- 16 The novel has several settings: the Magda River on the tradeboat, the Alcazar, Porto Sol, the salt mine tunnels, Zipa, and the Clash of Warriors outside Fugaza. Which would you most like to visit? Why? How does the setting influence the plot?
- 17 Describe Saavedra. List the advice and lessons he teaches the young pledges, and then rank them from most important to least.
- 18 What scene in the book is your favorite? Why? Are the characters in that scene also your favorite?
- 19 What surprised you most during the battle and its aftermath? What did you learn about the main characters when they were put through this ultimate test of their courage? –
- 20 Predict what you think will happen next to Tali, Chey, Zarif, and Brindl. What will their lives be like in a year? What do you hope happens next?

COMMON CORE: ALIGNED PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Cite key quotes that reveal the most important information on the following topics from the novel:

Topic	Key quote	WHY this quote is KEY to understanding the novel
History of Tequende		
The guilds		
The Second Guard warriors		
The religion/beliefs of Tequende's people		

SUMMARY

Summarization is a key skill for comprehension, it's that simple. If you can simplify a text down to its most important components, then you obviously understand it. The act of summarizing can help you remember key details, and it's a great study skill to boot. At the end of each chapter, write a one-sentence summary on a sticky note. Consider not just WHAT happened but WHY it matters. This will also help you discuss the theme. Be sure to mark the chapter number on the sticky note in the upper right-hand corner.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

EXAMPLE: CHAPTER ONE

As Tali practices fencing on her family's tradeboat to prepare herself for the Second Guard, she spies another tradeboat in flames and dives into the river to help the family members to safety.

Then, sort the sticky notes into the following chart where they best belong. Compare your choices to that of a reading partner or small group for discussion:

The protagonist discovers a conflict bigger than she imagined	The protagonist's goal/dream is threatened by others/events	The protagonist makes allies and builds skills to reach her goals	The protagonist makes a choice that shows change/growth

SECOND GUARD: THEME EXPLORATION

Theme—a universal truth about life embedded in a piece of literature, most often unstated.

Consider the following literary elements as they apply to *The Second Guard* before beginning brainstorming on possible themes.

Title: Why do you think the authors chose this title?	
Characters: What did the main characters learn? How did they grow/change?	
Setting: How important was the setting to the story?	
Conflict: What was the internal conflict of the protagonist? What was the external conflict? How did they relate to each other?	
Language: What did the authors spend time describing/developing? Which scenes were most descriptive/filled with imagery?	



THEMATIC STATEMENTS

After carefully considering the literary elements above, brainstorm a list of important topics or issues that the authors address within the text:

1. Ex: Courage _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Circle or highlight the topic you think is most important in the story. Next, brainstorm for a moment the lessons you've learned about this topic. Consider what the authors want the reader to know or realize about this topic by what happened in the story.

Ex: Courage	Your topic: _____
There are lots of different types. When things are the worst, you often see courage in action. Anyone can show courage. It looks different with each person.	

Craft a thematic statement based on your brainstorm. But remember:

- Thematic statements are often poetic, so they usually take some revision.
- The statement must appear true both in the world of the book and in the real world.
- It should be able to be defended with evidence and examples from the text.

THEMATIC STATEMENT

Topic	Thematic Statement	Key quote that supports the theme
Ex: Courage	It takes courage to defy expectations and meet challenges even when little hope of success exists.	“For Tequende!” Drayvon yelled, fearlessly leading the charge.

CHARACTER MOTIVATION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

PRIMARY MOTIVATION:

The reason why a character acts, thinks, speaks, or feels the way they do. It’s often tied to their deepest desires or fears.

CONFLICTING MOTIVATION:

When a character’s wants and desires are not simple, but are complicated by relationships and decisions that could impact others.

Fill out the following chart and discuss the following questions: Which characters change the most over the course of the novel? How do these characters show that they're conflicted? Which character is the most compelling to you? Why? How do authors develop sympathy for a character? Which do you think is more important in a novel: character or plot? How does one impact the other?

Character	Primary motivation	Conflicting motivation	How these characters interact/change each other	Is the PLOT or the THEME by this character? Why?
Tali				
Zarif				
Chey				

STRUCTURE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Authors manipulate time for many reasons: to reveal character motivations, to increase conflict and mystery, and to create a sense of surprise. After reading the novel, fill out the following chart to discuss the structure of the novel. This is to prepare for discussion; there are no right or wrong answers as long as you can logically defend your ideas.

Scene	Motivation	Mystery	Tension	Surprise
Tali helps rescue Paulo and family				
Flashback: Tali says good-bye to her father				
Tali and Drayvon trade insults at first meal				
Tali is surprised by Jaden in the training theater at night				
Tali meets the Diosa				
Tali visits her family in Zipa				

Which of these scenes do you think was most effective in achieving its purpose? Which element of pacing is most important to you: motivation (character), mystery, tension, or surprise? Why?

Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, co-author of Disney's *The Second Guard* and an English teacher, created this guide.

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THE SECOND GUARD

Hardcover

978-1-4231-6909-3

\$16.99

Disney • HYPERION

Los Angeles New York

www.DisneyBooks.com

