

Summer the Firefly Book Club Questions

1. Why do you think the author wrote this story?
2. What makes this "Summer" special in the story, and why is she important in her environment?
3. What special trait does Summer the Firefly possess?
4. Who is your favorite character in the story, and why?
5. If you were the author, what would you change in the story?
6. What is the setting of the story? What makes it special?
7. Have you ever seen or caught a firefly? When or Why not?
8. What environments do you think the Firefly would not do well in?
9. What is special about Bioluminescence? What have you seen that reminds you of this natural ability?
10. Why do you think the author begins her story with the King Deer?
11. What character does not normally live or interact with animals of the Woods?
12. Why do you think a dog was introduced in the story? Do you think this character is important? Why or Why not. (prediction)
13. What time of year does this story take place?
14. How could you find more information about a firefly?
15. Where do you think you could go to see a firefly/fireflies? Would the journey be long or short?
16. Why is it important to learn about animals of the woods? Do you think they are different than animals of the forest? Why?
17. What animal/s do you think the author will write about next? Why?
18. If you were the illustrator, what would you change? What did you like best?

Book Club Teacher's Guide

1. I wrote this story to introduce an unusual insect that makes a very short appearance in this world. The natural occurrence of bioluminescence is unique and can excite students to search out other species that have this capability as well (like fish.) I also wrote this story because I walked into the woods and saw thousands of them dancing in the night sky... it was incredible.

This story was also written to introduce the main characters of this series of children's books. (In the Woods)

2. Summer is special because she marks the start of the summer season even though she may show up before or after the official calendar start of summer. It is a natural way of determining the season if one does not know the calendar day, just like the first frost is an indication that winter has arrived.

Summer is important to her environment because animals do not have calendars. She let's them know that it is summer. Although many characters rejoice on her entry into the Woods, there are other creatures/insects that need to be warned that their environment is going to change and may be harder. (lack of water, overheating, less to eat)

3. Summer's special trait is bioluminescence, the ability to produce cool light (not heat). This trait allows her to call to mates, or attract insects so that she may eat (depending on her species of firefly)

4. Answers will vary. The important part to this question is to determine if they liked the character through their actions, speech or illustrations. You can expand on all these, discussing what role the animal plays in the woods and if the author will write a story about their favorite animal. (prediction)

5. I love the answers. Don't be surprised by the child that wants Summer to die or be killed, it's always an answer. Simply say that she will die, as do all living creatures and move on. ☺ (They have a short life span)

6. The setting of the story is in the "woods." What makes it special is that it is small, smaller than a forest and has a smaller number of animals. As the series progresses, I introduce more unusual animals in the woods that most children do not know exist or have never seen. The key is to remember that larger animals like bear, bobcats etc. typically do not live in the woods.

7. This is always a great question for children around the world... because some have never and will never experience a firefly because they do not exist in their part of the world. Depending on where you teach, you might locate the closest place/area where your children can travel to see them. You should definitely view a video on them. For students that have seen them, and caught them, I suggest you give them a three sentence limit when they respond or you will NEVER get past this question. Fireflies are too exciting!!

8. The answers to this question should vary. But clearly your student/s should recognize that a firefly exists where it is warm, so any cold environment would not do. However, it would fun to encourage them to write a story about a firefly that takes a vacation in a cold place like the North Pole. (They have to remember she doesn't give off heat.)

9. Your student/s should have read the non-fiction page of the story to find the answer to this question. Bioluminescence is a "cool" light that is produced. The answers should address: mating, prey, communication etc.

My guess to the second half of this question is: other animals that possess this unusual trait or the glow sticks that so many children love.

10. I start the story with the King Deer because it is my way of introducing one of the most important main characters of the series... he is, after all, the KING DEER. I also wanted to show how the woods had grown throughout his life; and it was an easy way to introduce other animals that would play important roles throughout the series.

11. The answer to this question should be very clear, it would be the dog, Sequoia. She is not a wild animal but is domesticated (a pet.)

12. The answers will vary on this question. The character is very important and the students should get a hint from the fact that a pet dog is in the Woods AND that her paw print is at the end of the book with the words, Keep Reading! She will become an integral part of the series and was the inspiration for all the stories.

(Back story: Sequoia, my dog, walked with me each day in the Woods before I headed out to school to teach. The stories all have some truth to them and were based on our walks)

13. The story took place at the start of summer.

14. The students should have read the non-fiction page/s of the story to find more websites and books on the subject. They may also go to my website: Vikkilynnsmith.com to find info, play games and find much, much, more.

15. The answers will vary depending on where you live. However, you can suggest they go to Tennessee, USA where fireflies are famous for their synchronized flashing.

16. The answers will vary. Some will say you should know the dangers of walking in the woods with wild animals, others will say they need to know in case they camp...

The animals of the Forest are actually different than wooded areas. There are some cross over, but when the In the Forest series is published, students will get to witness the exciting stories of bears, moose, antelope just to mention a few.

17. The answers will vary, but remind them that the author is writing about the Woods.

18. The answers to this question are all subjective but always fun. You could encourage your students to draw a page of what they imagined.

Teacher Suggestions for activities:

~ Have students picture walk the book, discussing the importance of the illustrations. (The illustrator had to learn all about the woods before doing this book since she lives in Brazil, a tropical location.

~ Have students draw their favorite scene from the book and write a paragraph about why they liked it.

~ Have students "Buddy" read the book with k-2nd grade.

~ Have students go to the Vikkilynnsmith.com website and research more information on the firefly.