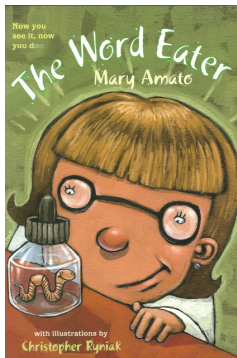


# The Word Eater Reading Guide

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## Thinking about the story

When the tests disappear, Mr. Droan gives everyone a detention. "A ping of guilt hit Lerner, but she ponged it away remembering that she hadn't *intended* to get everybody in trouble." (p55). Do you agree with Lerner? Should she feel bad because she didn't *mean* for people to get in trouble from her action?

How did Lerner feel about deleting Ripper the Attackaterrier? Does Lerner delete other

Attackaterriers?(p82) What are the intended and *unintended* consequences of deleting the Attackaterriers?

What does Bobby do with Fip's powerful magic? (p93)

## Can you imagine?

Can you imagine how it would feel to hear a parent talk like Mr. Nitz? What might you consider doing – without a powerful friend like Fip?

Bobby and Lerner's parents tell them that "they couldn't let the MPOOEs bother them and ...they had to do the right thing, no matter what kind of peer pressure they were up against." Bobby and Lerner "nodded ... knowing it wasn't as simple as their parents made it sound."(p103) Can you imagine how Bobby and Lerner feel? Why isn't it as simple as their parents make it sound? Why do you think the parents thought it might be so easy?

Why do you think Sharmaine felt that the MPOOE was "more trouble than it's worth, possibly the worst club on earth" and that she needed to "Escape! Before it's too late" (p61)

If you HAD to pick one, which would you rather belong to: MPOOEs or SLUGs? Why? What might you change about the attitudes and activities of each group?

Lerner has a "moral moment of truth" when she realizes that she could *include* or *exclude* Bobby from the new group. Can you imagine being in

this position? What might the reasons to exclude Bobby? Or *include* him? (p115)

Lerner has power, but also pressure when she becomes the leader of the new non-club (p120-3). Can you imagine how it would feel to make decisions that affect other people's lives and feelings?

Why do you think the students listened to Reba? What do you think made them follow along with her, even when she was mean to them? Can you imagine being the same position as Sharmaine or Winny? Why might it be hard to stand up for yourself? (p125)

If you could choose a word for Fip to eat, what would it be? What do you think the *ramifications* of losing that object would be?

## Wonderful words

ominous (p2) skinch (p6) gizzard (p7)  
ecstatic (p10) oblivion (p89) quadrupled (p107)  
Gurkengabel (p110)

## Intriguing images

She felt like a bug under a microscope. (p5)

Sharmaine's "voice was sincere and nicely conspiratorial." (p57)

The sun streamed through Lerner's window, "spreading out on her yellow quilt like butter on top of French toast." (p105)

Dr. Jay's "mouth [was] hanging open like a black hole." (p32)

Fip "was a worm, an ordinary and *very important* worm. (p143)

## Marvelous maxims

Knowledge is power. (*Francis Bacon*)

Appetite for too much power caused the angels to fall. (*Francis Bacon*)

Words are so wonderful to read, so nourishing to the mind. (*Mary Amato*)