

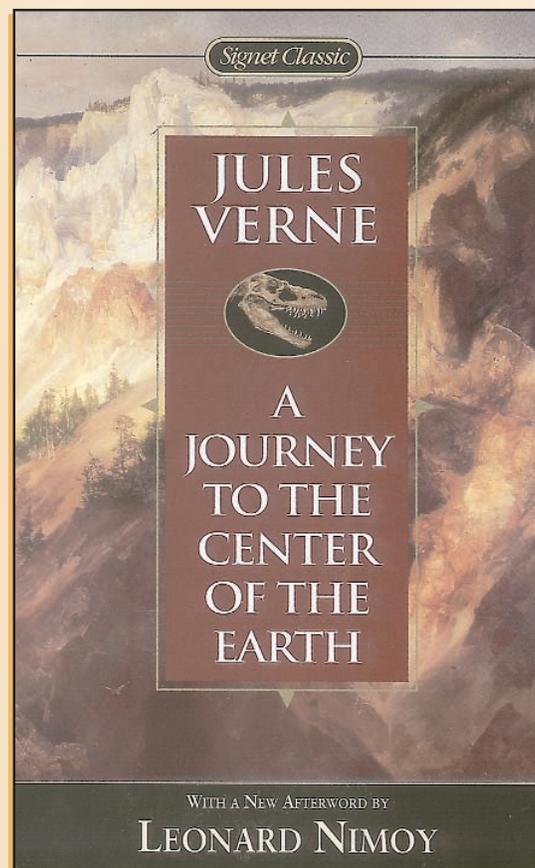
Signet Classic

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSIC EDITION OF

JULES VERNE'S

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

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S E R I E S E D I T O R S :

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INTRODUCTION

Journey to the Center of the Earth by Jules Verne is a novel that literally plunges the reader into the center of the earth through vivid description, detailed explanations, and the “eyewitness” accounts of the narrator. On the most basic level, *Journey* is an adventure story—a tale of the obstacles, encounters, and wonders. The eccentric scientist Professor Hardwigg finds directions to the center of the earth in an old book and sets out, along with his nephew Henry and the guide Hans, to Iceland where they find the mountain and the shaft that allows them access to the depths of the earth. On a deeper level the story can be seen as man’s journey into himself, always probing deeper for what lies at his center.

Written in 1864 this novel is a remarkable look into the future. Although students will recognize scientific predictions that were based on inaccurate assumptions, language that is somewhat antiquated, and a beginning that proceeds at a leisurely pace, they will appreciate Verne’s ability to weave into the story information and questions about science that will keep them in a state of curiosity and wonderment. Since the novel moves at a slower pace than action-packed thrillers like *Star Wars* on which today’s students have been raised, a good strategy to keep students involved in the novel is to provide them with many opportunities to predict what will happen and to encourage them to look for clues about what is to come. Students will gradually begin to understand how far ahead of his time Verne was in comprehending science and in basing his writings on some sense of the possible. They will see why he is considered by many to be the father of science fiction.

Verne extrapolated his adventures and inventions from scientific fact and what was known in the world at the time. Verne’s emphasis on then current scientific knowledge makes his work unique. Laying a carefully documented scientific foundation for his fantastic adventure stories, he forecast with remarkable accuracy many scientific achievements of the 20th century. He anticipated flights into outer space, submarines, helicopters, air conditioning, guided missiles, and motion pictures long before they were developed. This teacher’s guide encourages student participation through activities that encourage students to interact with the novel and think about the science involved in the novel.

Students who are mature, avid readers and like to be challenged with new information and ideas are the ideal audience for this novel. Introducing them to exciting minds such as Verne’s gives them a new perspective on today’s advances in writing and science, helping them understand that contemporary society did not invent information and imagination. Additionally, students learn that even prior to the age of computers humans possessed depth and breadth of knowledge. Verne was curious, fascinated by the world, and always wanted to know more. He shared what he learned with others through the medium of the novel. His other goal, to entertain his readers, was met through the construction of plotlines that continuously move readers through the work and the adventure. *Journey to the Center of the Earth* is not only a model of well crafted writing but a prototype of the kind of adventure stories that are so popular today in movies and in books.

A focus of this teacher’s guide is to place students in the exciting role of explorers, with you acting as supporter and guide. Its goal is to help establish an interactive classroom in which students share written responses in small groups and then with the whole class, emphasizing discovery and involvement. When students raise questions about the time period, the background of the author, the unusual vocabulary and concepts, you can share information or encourage students to locate it themselves through such resources as the Internet. Sharing information with students as they raise questions is more effective than overwhelming them with information out of context. Stopping for short research sessions can whet their reading appetite.

Likewise, when students debate issues and opinions they are encouraged to return to the text to support their assertions. Although this guide has an abundance of activities and questions, the intent is to support you and your students’ choices. It is not important or even desirable to have students respond to every chapter. More realistically, you might ask students to respond to one suggestion for every four or five chapters read. Students can share their work in small groups, raising the interest of other students. It is important to vary the activities and keep the work interesting by letting students use their imaginations as they demonstrate their involvement in the book.

The guide is divided into three sections. The first section provides background information to assist in answering questions. The Overview contains a brief biographical sketch of Jules Verne and a list of background information on what was happening in the world of science in the middle of the nineteenth century. The second or teaching section of the guide contains activities arranged for use either before, during, or after reading the novel. The third section provides ideas for extending the students’ learning beyond the novel.

OVERVIEW

SOME NOTES ON THE NOVEL

The structure of this novel is simple, developed mainly through a single linear plotline told in retrospect. Students will find it easy to follow what is happening. Also, the relationships among the three main characters are easy to understand since they are seen close-up with no other characters to complicate the focus. The relationship between Harry (Henry) and Professor Hardwigg changes and grows in this plot-dominant novel, allowing examination of characterization of subtleties. The Afterword in the Signet Classic edition suggests an interesting approach to analyzing Verne's characters as representations of the mind, the body, and the soul.

What does take reader energy, of course, is the stunning array of scientific information. Many questions are raised creating an urge to run to an encyclopedia or the Internet to learn about more fascinating information or check its accuracy. *Journey to the Center of the Earth* makes the reader want to know and understand more. This was part of Verne's purpose; he viewed the novel as equal parts entertainment and instruction.

HISTORICAL COMMENTARY

In the mid-19th century, during Verne's lifetime, exploration to unknown lands was in vogue. During this period, the interior of Africa, the geographical and magnetic poles, and much of Central and South America were little known by Europeans. Well known explorers such as Sir Richard Burton and Henry Morton Stanley and David Livingston were exploring above the earth's surface as their fictional counterparts Professor Hardwigg and Harry were exploring below.

Also Charles Darwin was gaining attention for his theory of evolution which is touched on by Verne in this novel. New frontiers were opening while "new ideas about the planet's core, prehistoric man, dinosaurs, and early life on earth battled religious intolerance and Barnum-like hoaxes" (Afterword 292). The Afterword of this Signet Classic edition explains that Verne "was able to adapt nearly every important element in the story's action from contemporary, intellectual, literary, scientific, and geographical thought" (291). The world during Verne's lifetime was a ferment of new ideas and was exploding with new knowledge. Verne captures that spirit in *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

VERNE'S LIFE

Jules Verne was born in 1828 in France and died in 1905, spending the majority of his life writing over eighty books. He was born to a father who was a lawyer and to a mother who came from a family of ship builders and sea captains. The oldest of five children, Jules was trained in law but was more interested in writing opera librettos and plays, much to the chagrin of his father. After his first book was published in 1863, he devoted his life to writing, although geography and travel remained dominant interests.

Verne had no formal training in science. His passion was geography; everything else he learned from his reading, which included about fifteen newspapers a day. He took voluminous notes giving him a good sense of the emerging knowledge in many fields. He was very modest about his ability to predict inventions, saying he only extended what was already happening at the time.

SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

After decoding a scrap of paper he found in an old book, Professor Hardwigg decides to undertake the Journey to the Center of the Earth that the paper says is possible. Brushing aside the concerns of his nephew Harry about the temperature of the earth's interior, the Professor insists that Harry accompany him on the journey. Gathering needed supplies, the pair depart two days later for Mt. Sneffels in Iceland, the point through which they can gain access to the core of the earth.

With the Icelander Hans as their guide, the party undertakes the rugged journey up to the mountain, stopping to rest along the way at the homes of Icelanders. Through these contacts they learn much about Icelandic culture. Once they reach the mountain, the three descend into the crater and after several days determine which of three shafts is the one through which they can make their descent. Aided by Hans' s knowledge of how to use ropes they travel downward more than a mile the first day. The Professor explains that they are now at sea level and the real journey is just beginning.

At the bottom of the shaft, they come upon four crossed paths that they can follow and the Professor quickly chooses one. After several days trekking and almost out of water, they must retrace their steps because the path dead ends. Finally returning to the place of the four crossed paths, Harry collapses and assumes they will return to the surface. Although the Professor shows concern for Harry, he asks for one more day to find water before they abandon the journey. They select a different route and soon discover water.

Days later they find a well-like shaft through which they descend to twenty-one miles below the surface of the earth. Continuing to descend rapidly, Harry goes ahead of the others and soon finds himself alone. In desperation he retraces his steps but becomes hopelessly lost. It is only after much suffering four days later that Harry is reunited with his uncel Hans.

As Harry is recovering he hears the sound of waves and thinks he sees light. In fact, the three have arrived at what they name the Central Sea, a vast underground body of water. At this point in the novel (Chapter 27) scientific wonders appear regularly. Exploring the area around the sea, the travelers find what looks like a forest but is actually forty foot mushrooms. The Professor explains to the astounded Harry how it is possible for plants to live beneath the earth. They continue their exploration of the area, finding bones of mastodons and other evidence of plant and animal life.

The Professor decides that they must cross the ocean to continue their descent even further into the earth. Lashing together wood mineralized by the sea to create a raft, the clever Hans rigs up a rudder. Once underway they are surprised by how quickly the raft moves. Harry has been given the job of keeping a good record of his observations. He drops a hook and soon a fish is caught, an ancient species long extinct in the world above. Harry daydreams about huge animals and plants, visualizing the evolution of the earth and its inhabitants.

The Professor becomes impatient because the sea is so much larger than he expected, and they are no longer descending. Trying to learn the depth of the sea, the Professor attaches a crowbar to a cord and throws it overboard. The cord runs out at two hundred fathoms, and the retrieved crowbar bears marks that look like teeth bites. Days later two huge monsters surface, battle, and almost swamp the raft. Continuing on, the three spot what they think is another giant monster but discover it is an island with a boiling water geyser. Harry suggests that there must be an internal heat source, but the Professor refuses to hear anything that refutes his own theory.

The next morning a storm strikes with fury and rages on for several days. The explorers tie themselves and their gear to the raft to avoid being tossed into the sea. A fire ball jumps onto the raft, destroys the mast and sail, and threatens them with its electric power.

The raft is eventually cast up on a rocky shore in the midst of the storm and Hans carries Harry to safety. As the storm dies down they find to their dismay that they have been carried back to the same shores from which they left. The Professor is enraged and insists on repeating the sea part of their journey. Exploring this area which is farther along the coast than their starting point, the Professor and Harry find enormous shells as long as fifteen feet and encounter a huge field of bones. Harry thinks the bones might contain the whole history of animal life. The Professor is delighted when they find a human skull. Harry shares his understanding of the importance of his uncle's find by describing what was happening in the world of paleontology or the science of fossil life. He discusses the views in Europe at that time that man's origins were even more ancient than than been previously believed. Then the two find more and more skeletons and wonder if these humans always lived beneath the earth or had ever lived on it.

Continuing their explorations they come across a beautiful forest of ferns and pines lacking color. They spot gigantic animals such as elephants and in the distance see a twelve-foot tall human being. Afraid of confrontation, they leave the area with many questions about man's origins. As they retrace their steps to the beach and the raft, Harry spots a rusted dagger which the Professor believes is from the sixteenth-century. He thinks it was probably used to carve an inscription on the rocks, and they find the initials A. S. carved beside the entrance to a dark and gloomy tunnel. With evidence that Arne Saknussemm has traveled this way, they enter the passage only to discover that it is blocked by solid granite.

The three decide to blast their way into the tunnel. They set the charge and retreat to the raft. The explosion opens a chasm that appears to be swallowing the Central Sea. They are thrown down on the raft and swept along with the rushing waters. Harry estimates their speed to be at least one hundred miles an hour as they are drawn deeper into the blackness of the center of the earth. Their fall is stopped by what appears to be a water spout.

As Harry half dreams, he thinks the raft has landed and he is in a small cave. A crocodile-shark monster and a huge ape come towards him, stop when they see each other, and engage in fierce battle. As the survivor comes towards Harry, he wakes and realizes he is still on the raft but that it is now ascending as the waters are pushed up a narrow shaft. Harry is consumed by hunger but the rising temperature in the shaft becomes his main concern, and the party soon discover that the liquid beneath the raft is boiling hot. The Professor explains that an eruption is about to take place, and they are on top of the lava flow hurtling towards the earth's surface.

Harry awakes to find Hans supporting him on a mountainside. While making their way down, they learn from a young shepherd that they are on the island of Stromboli in Italy.

Once back in Germany, the three are treated like heroes and the Professor's achievements are recognized.

BEFORE READING

Although the plot of this novel is linear and easy to understand and the language only occasionally challenging, getting into the novel may be difficult for some students. The pace of the plot is slower than plots of contemporary science fiction novels and movies.

Read the first several chapters aloud to assist students in familiarizing themselves with Verne's style, language, and pace. Mature readers then should be able to read the novel with no trouble. In order to get students involved in and thinking about the issues, the plot, and the setting of the novel, select several of the following activities or questions for student oral, written or artistic response.

1. If you could be an expert on anything in the world, what would it be? To what lengths would you go to gather information?
2. If someone told you they would take you miles down into the earth, how would you react? What would be your biggest concerns?
3. Some of the earlier parts of the novel take place in Iceland. What do you know about Iceland? What are your impressions of the country?
4. What do you know about the center of the earth? What theories have you heard about the composition of the earth's core?
5. When you think of the center of the earth what images, colors, and scenes do you see? What would you expect it to look like? Draw a picture or create a model of your image of the center of the earth.
6. If you were going on a journey or an adventure, what would you have to do to get ready? How would you know what to take?
7. What would be too scary for you to do—what is your limit? Would you be willing to go up in space; beneath the ocean?
8. What were your greatest childhood fears? Did they have to do with the dark, with heights, with speed, with going downhill rapidly, with monsters or very large beasts, with being caught in a natural phenomenon such as a tornado? Share your fears and tally the class's fears to see what most people consider scary.
9. Create the most fearful scenario you can, based on the class's tally of fears. Illustrate it, and then share it with your classmates. As you read *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, compare your ideas of what is scary to what Harry experiences.
10. If your parents or some one else whom you trust and love wanted you to go on a hazardous journey, how would you react? Compare your reactions to Harry's as you read the novel.
11. What do you know about the plant and animal history of the world? In groups piece together what you know about the earth's early evolution and the eventual extinction of some animals and plants.
12. In groups create a collage from magazines showing what you imagine the center of the earth to be like. Use words as well as pictures.
13. How is a journey different from a trip? What journeys have you taken? Think of a journey as not merely physical, but also as a life-changing experience, accomplishment, or series of events. Or, perhaps your journey is in your imagination. Tell the story of your journey to the class or a small group.
14. In what ways might it be valuable for us to know more about what the inside of the earth is like?

WHILE READING

Select one or more of the following for students to do throughout their reading of the novel.

1. Keep a dialog journal. Divide each page in half vertically. In one column write what is happening; in the other column write your reactions. Which lines from the novel, ideas, or actions resonate with you or repulse you?
2. Keep a character journal. Choose one of the three major characters. After every few chapters, write how you imagine the character would react to the events in the chapter.

3. Make a map of the journey so that when you complete the novel you can see its entirety. At various points during your reading, compare your map with another student's and discuss similarities and differences
4. Keep a log of words with which you are unfamiliar, jotting them down along with the page number on which each appears.
5. Keep a log of Harry's emotional ups-and-downs so you can see in what ways he has grown by the end of the journey.
6. Chart the Professor's emotions and behavior throughout the trip. What patterns do you find?
7. Write down all the new ideas and information you encounter as you read the novel.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

These questions and activities are designed to involve readers more deeply in the story. The questions should be used sparingly so as not to overwhelm the students.

CHAPTER 1: MY UNCLE MAKES A GREAT DISCOVERY

1. List all the things you learn about the Professor in this chapter.
2. How would you fit into this kind of household? What would be most difficult for you?
3. On page 10 the nephew says in reference to his uncle: "To my notion the best part of his possessions was his goddaughter, Gretchen." What would you say to the uncle or to your own parents if they considered you their possession?

CHAPTER 2: THE MYSTERIOUS PARCHMENT

1. What kind of code would you use to protect a secret?
2. Uncle Hardwigg explains that Arne Saknussemm knew many languages. Why do you suppose scholars in earlier centuries could understand so many languages?
3. What are your impressions of Uncle Hardwigg? Of Harry?

CHAPTER 3: THE ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY

1. Discuss Harry's seeming compliance to his uncle's wishes. Why do you think he behaves as he does?
2. "All his (Hardwigg's) energies were focused on one point" (21). What in your own life are you willing to focus so much energy on?
3. "His imagination is a perfect volcano and to make discoveries in the interests of geology he would sacrifice his life" (21). Are there things you believe in so strongly that you would give up your life?
4. What sense can you make of the translated message?
5. Could the information in the message make you curious enough to want to undertake such a trip?

CHAPTER 4: WE START THE JOURNEY

1. How would you react if given the opportunity to go on a trip like this? Write a letter to the Professor either accepting or declining his invitation to join him.
 2. How do you view Hardwigg's insistence that the journey must be made?
 3. When Harry tells Gretchen of the trip he is surprised when she says, "If I were only a man! I should look upon it as an honor to accompany him." (29). Why do you think that women were viewed as being incapable of such trips?
 4. Hardwigg assembles ropes, rope ladders, torches, gourds, iron clamps, crowbars, alpenstocks and pickaxes for the trip. How do you imagine each item might be useful for this trip? What does it seem Hardwigg is expecting to encounter?
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CHAPTER 5: FIRST LESSONS IN CLIMBING

1. What are your views on conquering your fears through the method Hardwigg uses?
2. How would you have reacted to Hardwigg's orders were you Harry?
3. Write the thoughts of Harry as he is ascending to the steeple for the first time, or write the thoughts of his uncle as he is forcing Harry to climb the steeple.

CHAPTER 6: OUR VOYAGE TO ICELAND

1. "But in the cause of science men are expected to suffer" (35). What examples from modern-day science bear this statement out? Do you believe people should make sacrifices so others can benefit from what they learn?
2. When Hardwigg gets seasick, Harry feels no pity for him. How would Harry explain his feelings on this matter?
3. What is Harry's greatest concern about the proposed journey?
4. When Harry explores the town, he realizes that unmarried women wear a brown knitted cap while married women cover their heads with a scarf. What do you make of this custom?

CHAPTER 7: CONVERSATION AND DISCOVERY

1. Why do you think our society does not read as widely as the Icelanders did?
2. Arne was persecuted for his ideas. What ideas might have been considered dangerous?
3. What do you make of the Professor's ability to turn things the way he wants to turn them?

CHAPTER 8: THE EIDER-DOWN HUNTER—OFF AT LAST

1. What kind of skills do you imagine it takes to be a successful eider-down hunter?
2. Since Hans and the Professor have such different personalities, how do you think they will get along on this journey?
3. Instruments, arms, tools, and medical equipment are gathered for the trip. Which of the supplies seems most useful to you? Which would you predict will get little use?
4. "I had every reason to believe that we had neither wild beasts nor savage natives to fear" (51). What can you learn about Harry's views and attitudes from his description of natives as "savage"?

CHAPTER 9: OUR START—WE MEET WITH ADVENTURES BY THE WAY

1. The Professor allows Hans to ignore him. Why do you think he doesn't get impatient or angry at Hans?
2. People's natures are revealed when they travel together. What do we find out about the Professor and about Harry?
3. The Professor says about Hans "that sort of people go ahead without knowing even what they are about" (56). Why do you think he makes such assumptions about people, and why does he seem to want to categorize people?

CHAPTER 10: TRAVELING IN ICELAND—THE LEPERS

1. Sometimes our words give away our upbringing. Harry says, "It was merely the house of a peasant." (60) What does this tell you about Harry, how he sees people, and how he was brought up?
 2. List all the Icelandic customs you learn in this chapter. Do any seem strange to you?
 3. The Professor seems to imply through his gestures and through his facial expressions that the volcano "is the giant I have made up my mind to conquer" (66) What else besides scientific information might the Professor want?
 4. From what you know of the physical qualities of Iceland, is it a place you would want to visit?
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CHAPTER 11: WE REACH MOUNT SNEFFELS—THE “REYKIR”

1. Hans keeps calm when the Professor explains that the journey will continue until he explores the volcano to its limits. What can we learn about Hans from his reaction?
2. Harry is afraid to descend into the bowels of the earth. What things would you worry about if you were to go on such an adventure? Make a list.
3. Is the Professor's scientific reasoning that this volcano could not become active correct?

CHAPTER 12: THE ASCENT OF MOUNT SNEFFELS

1. On pages 75 and 76 Harry gives a short history of the formation of the world. Check out his facts. Are they still believed to be correct or have new theories been advanced?
2. On the way up the mountain, Hans occasionally stops and piles up small heaps of rocks so they will not lose their way on the return. What is Hans assuming about the journey?
3. Harry says of Hans' rock piling efforts: “the precaution was a good one; though how utterly useless and unnecessary” (77). What do you believe Harry means?
4. Compare your most physically challenging adventure to the exhausting day described in this chapter. How do they compare?

CHAPTER 13: THE SHADOW OF SCARTARIS

1. Harry describes the beautiful scenery and sensation of being on top of a mountain. What is the most beautiful natural sight you have ever seen? How did it affect you? Write a poem capturing these images.
2. If you, like the three adventurers, had to wait several days, how would you spend your time?
3. Describe how you would feel knowing that you were to descend into the heart of the earth. What do you think they will find? What will it look like?

CHAPTER 14: THE REAL JOURNEY COMMENCES

1. Explain the system of ropes the Professor devises. How would you feel if you were descending on such equipment?
2. Harry's subtle humor once again becomes apparent in this chapter. Find the sentence on page 91 containing this humor. Would Harry ever imply such a thing to his uncle?
3. The Professor makes clear that he does not believe in the theory of a central fire in the earth. Comment on his beliefs. Do contemporary geologists think they have the answer?

CHAPTER 15: WE CONTINUE OUR DESCENT

1. Explain why the Professor believes the barometer will soon be worthless.
2. We know that descent into the ocean requires an equalization pressure on ascent. Why, according to the Professor, won't air pressure won't be a problem on their descent into the center of the earth?
3. What would your thoughts be if after many, many days of a difficult journey, someone told you that the trip was just now beginning?
4. Who do you believe is right about the temperature—Harry or the Professor?

CHAPTER 16: THE EASTERN TUNNEL

1. Do you think the Professor should have spent more time and thought on which of the four paths to take? What factors might influence his decision?
 2. Harry describes their sleeping place as “absolute solitude and complete security” (103). Do you think the price he has paid
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so far for this trip is worth these brief periods of happiness?

3. How has Harry benefited from the trip? What has he learned? List what he has learned and compare your list with your classmates' lists.
4. Notice how tactfully Harry tells his uncle he believes they are going uphill. What would he really like to say to him? Write the conversation he would like to have.
5. What do you think of the Professor's decision to press on even though there is no apparent source of water?

CHAPTER 17: DEEPER AND DEEPER—THE COAL MINE

1. Do you admire the attitude of the Professor and his willingness to continue the journey knowing how scarce water is? How would you react to him?
2. How do you envision the journey back to the the point where they selected the wrong path? What do you imagine the conflicts or obstacles will be?
3. Script the talk Harry would really like to have with his uncle.

CHAPTER 18: THE WRONG ROAD!

1. "My uncle bore them [the sufferings] like a man." (114) "by no means accustomed to signs of womanly weakness in the Professor" (115). From what you know about men and women, refute or support Harry's perceptions.
2. Why do you think the Professor shows uncharacteristic concern for Harry? Do your feelings change towards him?
3. Remember a time in your life when you were very thirsty. How did this lack of water affect you?
4. Do you think Harry's poor physical condition due to lack of water and exhaustion is overstated in this chapter? Why or why not?
5. Considering the Professor's treatment of Harry and his desire to continue, what would you like to say to him?

CHAPTER 19: THE WESTERN GALLERY—A NEW ROUTE

1. Imagine yourself, as Harry does, in the middle of the earth with the whole weight of the earth's crust resting on your shoulders. Write a stream-of-consciousness paper from Harry's point of view. What are your thoughts? How are you feeling?
2. Why did Hans rise in the middle of the night and leave their sleeping place?
3. Although the Professor says, "All is over," (122) is he willing to give up the expedition? What is his motivation for completing this expedition?

CHAPTER 20: WATER, WHERE IS IT? A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT

1. How would you feel watching Hans hack away at the wall to reach water, knowing that he could bring an avalanche of rock down on your head?
2. Hans says little but acts when he sees a need. Is it easy to understand a person like Hans? Have you ever known anyone like him?
3. Harry says the water is "ferruginous." Can you guess what element is found in this water? How does it affect the body?
4. What do you think of the custom of naming places after travelers who encounter the lanscape features for what they believe is the first time?

CHAPTER 21: UNDER THE OCEAN

1. Harry compares his uncle's temperament to a raging river and Hans's temperament to a peacefully flowing river. What analogy would you use to capture Harry's temperament?
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2. Write down images conjured by the concept of being twenty-one miles below the earth's surface. Arrange your images into a poem.

CHAPTER 22: SUNDAY BELOW GROUND

1. What scientific questions are you asking yourself about this adventure underground? What things do you wonder about?
2. Upon their return the Professor would like to map their journey, making a kind of vertical section of the globe. Beginning with this chapter, jot down information so you can construct a vertical map of the trip.
3. What points does Harry want to argue with his uncle? Why does he decide not to anger him?
4. If you were traveling with this group, which question would you most want answered at this point in the journey?

CHAPTER 23: ALONE

1. Imagine the deep quiet of the places the group is traveling. What affect would this have on you?
2. Being one hundred miles down inside the earth must be overwhelming. After being underground for six weeks and still moving downward, what do you think would bother or worry you the most? Write your thoughts in a journal entry.
3. Harry now has no idea where he is. What advice would you give him?

CHAPTER 24: LOST!

1. Have you ever been lost or have you ever searched for someone who is lost? Recount your feelings.
2. What would you be thinking if you were in Harry's position? Record your thoughts.
3. Develop a short plan of action you think Harry should follow.
4. Have you ever been in a place so dark you cannot see your hand in front of you? Write down fragments of thoughts and images that come to you as you think about being in complete darkness.

CHAPTER 25: THE WHISPERING GALLERY

1. What does Harry's uncle say were the sounds like thunder?
2. How does he figure out the acoustic nature of the place he is in? How well would you be able to think if you were in Harry's predicament?
3. What did you learn from the Professor about his feelings for Harry? Do you see any pattern in his expression of feeling for his nephew?
4. Draw a sketch of where each of the characters is in relation to the others.

CHAPTER 26: A RAPID RECOVERY

1. How important is good luck and coincidence in finding Harry? Are any of the coincidences too hard to believe?
2. In addition to possessing the skills needed to guide an expedition of this scope, what else do we find out about Hans' skills in this chapter?

CHAPTER 27: THE CENTRAL SEA

1. How does Harry explain the light source?
 2. Can his explanation of clouds be verified by current scientific information?
 3. If you were underground for forty-seven days, what do you think you would miss most?
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4. Does the Professor's explanation of how sedimentary soil exists inside the earth make scientific sense?
5. If you could return to any time period to see plants and animals, which period would you most like to visit? Which animals and plants would you like to see?

CHAPTER 28: LAUNCHING THE RAFT

1. Does the Professor's explanation of the tides affecting the underground ocean make scientific sense?
2. The Professor says, "science has fallen into many errors" (173). Do you agree with him? Think of examples to either support or refute his statement?
3. The Professor explains that the wood for the raft had been mineralized by the sea. How does this differ from the earth's fossilization process?
4. Predict what the adventurers will encounter next. What advantages do you see to raft transportation? What disadvantages?

CHAPTER 29: ON THE WATERS—A RAFT VOYAGE

1. Harry, in a waking dream, imagined mammoth turtles and giant Mastodons. Why do you think this information is included in this chapter?
2. If you had an opportunity to hold or touch a live specimen of an extinct species, what would you choose?
3. Reread the section on Harry's "dream." From what you know of the formation and evolution of the world, does his dream seem accurate?

CHAPTER 30: TERRIFIC SAURIAN COMBAT

1. How would you respond to the Professor's grouching about wasting time?
2. Hans gets his pay regularly each week. Why might Verne think it important to include this information?
3. When the crowbar is retrieved with teeth bites on it, how would you react? What would you recommend to the others?
4. Write a news story for a tabloid newspaper explaining the teeth marks.
5. Make a sketch of one of the creatures Harry describes.
6. Compose the speech Harry would like to make to the Professor about putting them in so much danger by insisting on sea travel.
7. Harry declares, "My worst fears were realized" (161). What fears would you have if you were Harry? What are your worst fears?
8. Create a storyboard or picture outline of this chapter that would help a movie producer decide how to represent this chapter's main action in a movie.

CHAPTER 31: THE SEA MONSTER

1. Harry knows how to handle his uncle. Write a letter to Harry telling him how you think he gets along with the Professor.
2. Harry thinks he sees a monster. What have you imagined that turned out to be something entirely different?

CHAPTER 32: THE BATTLE OF THE ELEMENTS

1. Write the diary that Hans could have written as he is living through the storm.
 2. Write in stream-of-consciousness format all the thoughts going through Harry's mind when he first spots the fire ball until it disperses.
 3. Compare the worst storm you have ever witnessed to the storm described in this chapter.
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4. Make a prediction about where you think this storm took the adventurers.

CHAPTER 33: OUR ROUTE REVERSED

1. Would you feel better or worse after hearing the Professor say,
“We shall not come out by the same opening as that by which we entered” (214)?
2. Look at the list of food supplies. Could you exist on such a diet for an extended period of time? How would this diet affect you?
3. Write a nutritionist's report on the diet of the three characters during this journey, analyzing it in terms of what dietary requirements it meets or fails to meet.

CHAPTER 34: A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

1. What would be your reaction if you had suffered as this group had and accomplished nothing? Is there another way this could be interpreted? What of value could come out of such an experience?
2. Harry compares their great find to a book lover discovering a great library that had been burned down in an earlier age. What things from a much earlier time would you like to encounter? What could you learn from them?
3. How do you account for the presence of a human skull in the midst of all these animal bones (223)?
4. What do you think will happen now that they have found piles of mammal bones and a human skull?

CHAPTER 35: DISCOVERY UPON DISCOVERY

1. There has always been controversy about when humans first lived on the earth. What are your views and on what do you base them?
2. Why do you think all the bones are together in one big area? Create a scenario to explain this phenomenon.
3. What would you most like to discover or prove? Why is this important to you?

CHAPTER 36: WHAT IS IT?

1. What do you make of the strange new developments in this chapter? What do you believe Verne's purpose is in including this parallel universe?
2. So far, which of the wonders under the earth have been most difficult for you to accept? Explain.

CHAPTER 37: THE MYSTERIOUS DAGGER

1. Why is the Professor able to admit that he doesn't know where he is?
2. Why was the dagger left behind? Was it done on purpose?
3. Create a story about the dagger.

CHAPTER 38: NO OUTLET—BLASTING THE ROCK

1. Once Harry and the Professor discover Arne's initials, Harry is eager to continue the trip. Why do you think Harry's attitude changed so quickly?
 2. Do you agree that the dreadful storm they endured was really in their best interest? Describe a difficult time or event in your life that turned out for the best.
 3. What do you think will happen when they blast the rock?
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CHAPTER 39: THE EXPLOSION AND ITS RESULTS

1. Have you ever experienced the sense of falling? How did you handle this sensation?
2. Harry and his uncle may be having second thoughts about the wisdom of setting an explosion. If Harry broached the subject, how would the Professor respond? Construct that conversation.
3. Now that the raft has stopped, what do you think will happen next? What do you think stopped the raft from falling farther?

CHAPTER 40: THE APE GIGANS

1. What do you make of Harry's "dream"? Why do you think Verne put it here in the novel?
2. What possible fate could be in store for the three?
3. Why does it seem to bother the Professor so much that they are without food when he showed so little concern when they were without water?
4. Draw a cartoon strip that illustrates the events in this chapter.

CHAPTER 41: HUNGER

1. Do you have any meals that you remember as vividly as Harry remembers the meal he had once while he was birds' nesting? Why do you think you recall it so clearly?
2. Even in their great peril the Professor still believes, "While there is life there is hope" (266). Do you agree with him? Should you ever despair?
3. Harry often says, as he does in this chapter, "As long as he [Hans] received his three rix-dollars every Saturday night, he was prepared for anything" (267). Do you think anyone can work solely for money as Hans seems to do?

CHAPTER 42: THE VOLCANIC SHAFT

1. Harry says, "It is only when you suffer that you really understand" (268). In what ways do you think this is true? In what situations doesn't this advice seem to apply?
2. Is Harry stereotyping when he says in speaking of Hans, "who was yet gifted with the fatalistic resignation of Oriental character" (268)?
3. What can it mean when a compass goes mad and does not point in the true direction? Have you ever seen this happen?
4. Do you think the Professor is correct when he say this is the most fortunate thing that could have happened to them? Why? Why not?
5. What sorts of horrible things could happen to them next? Predict how you think they will extricate themselves from their predicament.

CHAPTER 43: DAYLIGHT AT LAST

1. Create the scene, left out by Verne, of the three being spit out of the volcano.
2. Write the thoughts the shepherd boy must have had when he saw the three disheveled men approaching him.
3. Now that the journey is over, what incidents do you think Hans will tell to his family when he returns to Iceland?

CHAPTER 44: THE JOURNEY ENDED

1. Write the newspaper articles announcing the homecoming of the Professor.
 2. Create an article that could have appeared in a scientific journal disproving the theory of central heat.
 3. Compose a letter Harry might write to his uncle explaining how the trip contributed to his growth as a person and how he felt about the experience now that it is over.
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AFTER READING

Students can select from among the several options that follow:

THEMES/ISSUES

1. If characters from this novel were on a talk show such as Oprah Winfrey, what issues would they discuss? What other guests would be invited on the show to provide a lively conversation? Write the script and perform it for your class.
2. Create a word collage that captures the essence of the novel and gives viewers a good idea of what the book is about. Cut out 30 to 40 words and phrases from magazines or newspapers that describe the novel. Words may describe setting, characters, theme, or plot. Write the book title in the center of a blank sheet of paper and then glue all the words on the page, filling the entire sheet. Write about why you chose the words.
3. How would you visually represent this journey? What symbols would you use? Try creating a poster or picture that represents the important elements of the story.
4. Examine Verne's stance on science. Does he elevate it to a position of authority? Does he view science with reverence and awe? If science is based on facts, how can there be different theories on the same topic? Participate in a panel discussion on these issues.
5. Does Verne value intuition over science or science over intuition? Look carefully at Harry as the embodiment of intuition and the Professor as the embodiment of science before drawing conclusions. Debate this topic.
6. One assumption of this novel is that exploration for new knowledge (i.e. through trips inside and on the earth) should not be questioned. Write an editorial on your views of the wisdom of inner earth explorations and the implications they might have for the world and its inhabitants.
7. Create a scrap book for Harry, cutting out pictures from magazines or drawing the mementos of his journey to the center of the earth that he would want in a scrap book.

CHARACTER

8. To show your understanding of one of the characters, go through several magazines and newspapers looking for advertisements of goods you think your character would like. Cut out the pictures, mount them on a poster board, and under each picture write a few lines about why this product would appeal to your character
 9. Write an article entitled "Learning Through Adversity" as Harry would write it.
 10. Create a list of values (such as knowledge, obedience, duty, love, friendship, loyalty and so on) that the three characters seem to exhibit. Then choose the top three values for each character and the three values that each character would not see as important. Which values do they share? Make some generalizations about the characters from this activity.
 11. If you have collected quotes from the Professor throughout the novel, collect them into a booklet called "The Real Professor Hardwig" and then write an explanation of what these quotes taught you about him.
 12. Create several awards for each of the three characters to commemorate some of their memorable actions in the novel. For instance to whom would you give an award for bravery? for foolishness?
 13. Create a home page with appropriate background and connections to links for the Professor or Harry.
 14. We get to know a lot about a character by understanding his fears. Think about the actions of Harry and the Professor and make some inferences about they fear the most. Write an essay on each character's major fear. Include the evidence you used to come to this conclusion.
 15. Select five current news or feature stories from television or news magazines you think the Professor or Harry would find interesting. Explain how your character would respond to what was happening in each story.
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ARCHETYPES

16. On page 299 in the Afterword, there is a short list of archetypal motifs such as light and dark. Choose one of the contrasting pairs of motifs and write an essay exploring the use of that motif in the novel.
17. Characters in many novels go on journeys and through these journeys learn much about life and about themselves. How do Harry and the Professor change by the end of the book? Describe the inner journey each of them takes through their explorations and what they learn by the end of the journey.
18. Compare Verne's novel to a contemporary science fiction or fantasy novel in which a journey occurs. Are there similar motifs and/or themes?

SETTING

19. Imagine you are a copy writer for a travel agency wanting to package and promote trips to the center of the earth. Create a pamphlet advertising the trips so that people will be willing to pay for them. Mention the settings as well as the adventures that are in store for vacationers. Use very positive, persuasive language.
20. Iceland was the setting for many chapters at the beginning of the story. Why do you think Verne selected Iceland as the site for a descent into the earth? Why did he give so much information about the culture and customs of Iceland? What impression do you think he was trying to create through his use of this country?
21. Select a contemporary science fiction or fantasy novel that moves from the "real" world to an "imaginary" world. How is the contemporary novels similar to Verne's novel?

LANGUAGE

22. Chapter 39 seems to read much faster than other parts of the book. Compare the sentence structure in this chapter to others in which Harry and his uncle are engaged in more leisurely activities. Compare sentence length, use of adjectives, use of active versus passive verbs and so on.
23. Examine the list of words you collected while reading the novel. Which do we no longer use? Look up these words in the dictionary. Why do you think these words are now obsolete. What words, if any, have taken their place?

PLOT

24. Create a series of telegrams the Professor might like to send to his fellow scientists reporting new discoveries. Collect them in a booklet and write an end piece summarizing what the Professor learned on his journey.
 25. Create a one-page newspaper covering at least three events in the story. Interview the characters as part of composing the news or feature stories.
 26. Decide which scenes or pictures from the novel each main character would want to remember. Then draw several of these "photos" for an album or write about which pictures the characters would want in his album.
 27. Review the book and make a list of all the things you find hard to believe. Then write Verne a letter explaining why they seem improbable and what you would put in their place.
 28. Create a series of six drawings in six squares showing a significant event in the novel. Under each picture or cartoon, write a few lines of explanation.
 29. Hans's role seems to be to do the extraordinary as a matter of course. What purpose does he serve in the story?
 30. If you were to do a five-part TV series of this book, how would you divide the story into episodes? What will you put in each episode? How will each episode conclude so viewers will tune in again?
 31. Make a timeline of the trip indicating the important events and also indicating what you would consider the easy parts as compared to the difficult parts. Share your timeline with your classmates. Compare the time lines and discuss why they differ.
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CRAFT OF WRITING

32. Look at how the chapters were written. Can you divide the chapters into distinct parts? Can you see any patterns in the chapters? Try your hand at constructing a chapter of a story as Verne does.
33. The Professor has a distinct style of arguing or answering objections. Find several examples of these arguments and then see if you can imitate the style the Professor uses for an argument of your own.
34. Select a chapter you think is quite descriptive and create a “found” poem from the words and phrases in the chapter. For instance, this “found” poem comes from pages 161 and 162:

The Sea Shore
The shore
A beautiful soft golden sand
mixed with small shells
the long deserted home of creatures of a past age
The waves
broke incessantly
with a sonorous murmur
a slight frothy flake arose
as the wind blew the waters
and many a dash of spray
was blown into my face.

35. Verne used only one extended flashback in this novel which appears in Chapter 41. Why did he use it at that point in the story? What did it accomplish? Are there other places the story could benefit from a flashback?
36. Jules Verne tells an exciting story, making readers want to know what is going to happen next. How does Verne create this suspense? What plot devices does he use to keep reader interest high? Try your hand at using some of these plot devices by creating a chapter of your own.

EXTENDED LEARNING**THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES AND/OR RESEARCH:**

1. Read other books by Jules Verne and compare them to *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.
 2. Read biographical information on Jules Verne and speculate on why he portrayed characters as he did.
 3. Research Iceland. How accurate is Verne's description? How accurate is Verne's interpretation of the literary of Icelanders? Present an oral report to the class, including photographs, of contemporary Iceland, its geography and people.
 4. Spend time doing research on the equipment the Professor used. Is there such a thing as a manometer, a Ruhmkorf coil?
 5. Select pieces of music to utilize in a fiction or video production of the novel. Write or explain orally why your selections are appropriate.
 6. To get an idea of how much Verne knew, be part of an all-class science fair in which students share information and visuals on such things as compasses, internal temperature of the earth, earliest species of plants and animals and where they originated, and scientists of the time. Brainstorm and list all the possible topics found in the novel. Select one topic to research and present it to the class.
 7. Critique the actions of the Professor in exploring the interior of the earth from the point of view of an environmentalist.
 8. What does contemporary scientific evidence suggest as the place where humans originated? How would the Professor have reacted to this information?
 9. Write and illustrate a picture book for children that is interesting but also teaches them about science. Utilize fields of science about which Verne writes.
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10. Do research on some of the real explorers of the late 1800s mentioned in the Afterword such as John Speke, Sir Richard Burton, Henry Morton Stanley and David Livingston, and the 1890s explorers of the Antarctica. Read some of their journals. Look at their illustrations and maps of their trips.
11. Gather information to present to the gentlemen of the 19th century to show them that women would be capable of this trip. Draw on your knowledge of women in sports and science.

THROUGH USING THE INTERNET

Users of the World Wide Web can simply type in Jules Verne's name and will find an interesting list of information. Zvi Har'El's Jules Verne collection is a good source as is the North American Jules Verne Society. These sites have biographical information and information on Verne's works, as well as reprints of interviews with Verne from 1894, 1895, and 1903. These interviews give the reader a good sense of Verne's personality, interests, and work habits. Other sites review recent criticism of Verne's work. Students can do much of their research on the Internet.

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See the Signet Classic edition of *Journey to the Center of the Earth* for a more complete bibliography of works by Jules Verne and biography and criticism.

SUGGESTED TITLES

Students interested in comparing some of the themes in *Journey to the Center of the Earth* to themes in other books may wish to read some of the books that follow.

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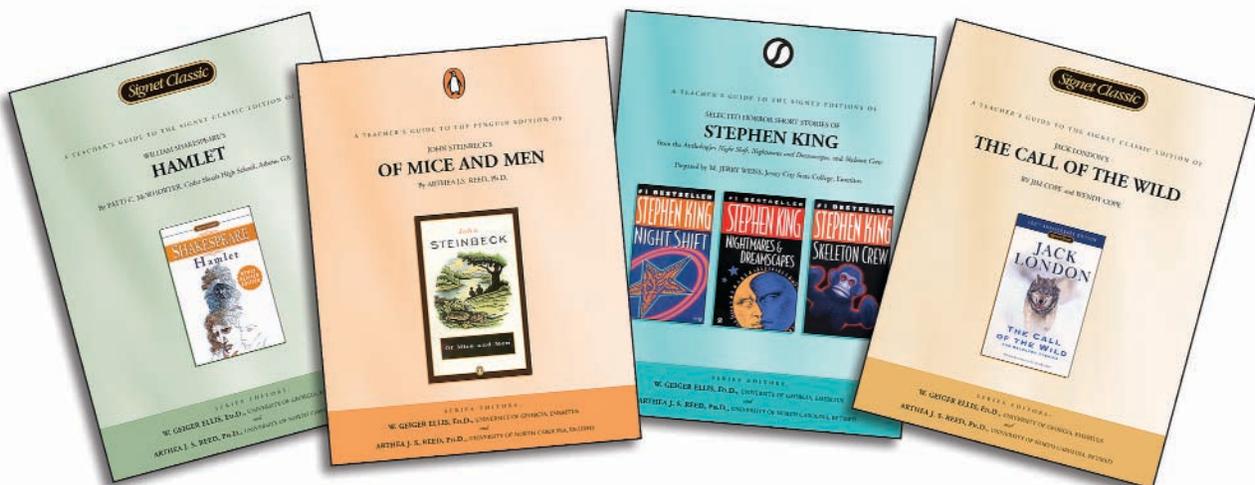
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