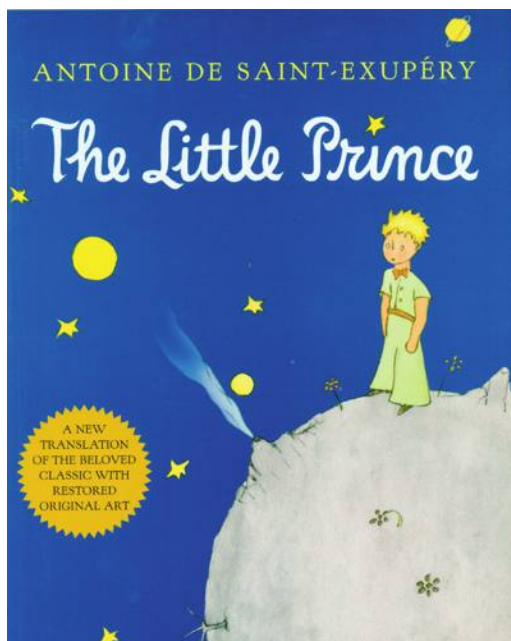


THE LITTLE PRINCE

by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Guide for Young Adult Readers



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About the Book

After crashing in the North African desert, a pilot encounters an inquisitive child who has also fallen from the sky. Over the course of the next week, the Little Prince tells the aviator about life on his tiny home planet before he traveled to neighboring asteroids and met six solitary men. Landing on Earth, the Little Prince's search for companionship is finally realized after he heeds the plea of a fox, forming a caring relationship that helps the boy and man also make a lasting connection. Translated into more than two hundred languages, *The Little Prince* is one of the best-selling and most beloved books of all time.

About the Author

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the "Winged Poet," was born in Lyon, France, in 1900. A pilot at twenty-six, he was a pioneer of commercial aviation and flew in the Spanish Civil War and World War II. His writings include *The Little Prince*, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, *Night Flight*, *Southern Mail*, and *Airman's Odyssey*. In 1944, while flying a reconnaissance mission for his French air squadron, he disappeared over the Mediterranean.

Discussion Questions

1. The narrator grew up to be a lonely man, until he crash-landed in the Sahara Desert and met the little prince. As the little prince shares his story, the narrator, whose life was desperate for meaning, is changed. Who in your life has come along and shared their stories with you? Who has changed your outlook on life, love, and essential truths?
2. The narrator draws a portrait of the little prince as he remembers him. He says, "If I try to describe him here, it's so I won't forget him. It's sad to forget a friend." Draw a picture of someone you wish to never forget. It could be someone you see every day or someone you haven't seen in weeks, months, or years.
3. From his tiny planet, the little prince was able to watch many sunsets just by moving his chair in the right direction. He says, "You know, when you're feeling very sad, sunsets are wonderful." Why might the little prince have been sad on his planet?
4. The little prince remarks about the flower, "I was too young to know how to love her." For much of the story the idea of being a grownup is a negative concept, but the little prince states here that he was "too young" to properly love. Is it possible that some good things come with age, while others are lost? How is love different in the eyes of a child from those of an adult? How has your idea of love changed over time?
5. If asked to draw a picture of love, the little prince might draw himself watering and caring for his flower, and the narrator might draw a picture of himself laughing with the little prince. Draw your own version of what love looks like.
6. Why do you think the little prince could see himself becoming friends with the lamplighter on the fifth planet? How are they alike?

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7. After meeting with the geographer, the little prince learns the word *ephemeral*. He learns that his beloved flower is ephemeral, and for the first time regrets leaving her. If the little prince could send the flower a letter expressing his regret, what do you think he would say?
8. On Earth, the little prince climbs a mountain and finds a view drawn in black and white (on page 55). What mood is expressed in this picture?
9. The fox tells the little prince, "Language is the source of misunderstandings." Explain what you think the fox means by this. Can you give an example of when language or words created a problem in your life or in the world at large?
10. Even after the little prince warns the fox that he will leave him someday, the fox still wants to be tamed by him. The fox claims he will look at the color of the wheat, golden like the little prince's hair, and be reminded of him. The memory will be enough for him. Do you agree with the fox? Why or why not?
11. The fox finally teaches the little prince, "One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes." Think back upon the first drawing our narrator created of the boa constrictor digesting an elephant. This hidden truth was so important to the narrator because he saw it with his heart but the adults didn't. What other essentials are out there that you can see only with your heart? Draw a picture with a hidden truth. Would you risk sharing it with others, even if they might not see what you do?
12. The little prince meets a railway switchman and they watch the train exchanges. The switchman pessimistically tells him, "No one is ever satisfied where he is." How is this true of even the little prince? Can you contradict this statement?
13. Does the little prince tame the narrator/pilot or does the narrator/pilot tame the little prince? Remember the fox states, "You become responsible forever for what you've tamed." Keeping the idea of responsibility in mind, who is the tamer and who is the tamed in this relationship?
14. The last picture in the book is again drawn in black and white and the narrator claims it is the "loveliest and the saddest landscape in the world." Why is it both of these to him? What other landscapes are both beautiful and sad?
15. If this book were to have a soundtrack, what songs could best express the following themes?
 - A. "One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes."
 - B. "You become responsible forever for what you've tamed."
 - C. "And no grownup will ever understand how such a thing could be so important."

Common Core Questions

1. Research the life of *The Little Prince's* author, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Compare and contrast his life to that of the pilot/narrator. Could this have been semi-autobiographical?

RL.7.9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors offication use or alter history.

2. The geographer uses the word *ephemeral* when discussing the little prince's flower. It is a new word for the little prince, but its meaning has a profound impact on him. Find a definition for *ephemeral* and analyze how this word is an integral part of the theme of the little prince's story.

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RL 8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

3. The little prince visited six planets, each with a single inhabitant. How were each of these inhabitants similar in their obsessions? How are they similar to the little prince? How are they different from the little prince?

RL 7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

4. On Earth, the little prince meets a snake, a railway switchman, a fox, and the pilot. Which of these characters has the biggest impact on the little prince?

RL 7.4. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

5. Write a brief scene in which the little prince returns to his star and meets his flower. Create a similar dialogue and content that would be fitting with the rest of the story. What would he say to his little flower? What would she say in return?

W.7.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.