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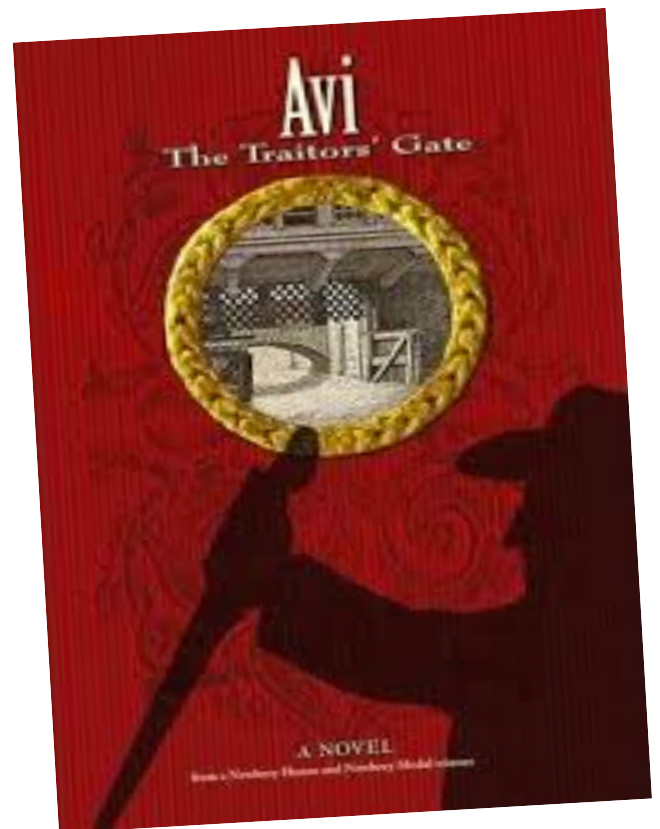


Building Communities that
Support Children's Reading

Texas The Traitors' Gate

By Avi

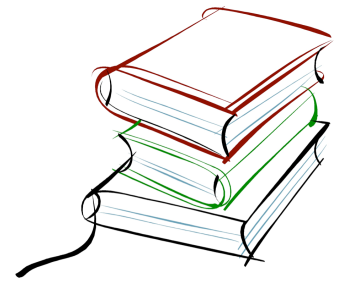
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4th Grade - H

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Synopsis

The Traitors' Gate



John Huffam is sure the tall man's beard is false. He's sure of little else in November 1849, the year he is fourteen, the year his father is sentenced to London's Whitecross Street Prison.

Maybe the man following John -- who claims to be one Inspector Copperfield -- can explain why. Surely, his father isn't prepared to reveal the truth, any more than the jovial bailiff, Mr. Tuckum, who knows something, but remains mum. Or the little Frenchman, Mr. Farquatt, who courts John's sister but seems most keen on Father's work at the Naval Ordinance Office. Or Mr. O'Doul, the Irishman who insists father owes him the unimaginable sum of three hundred pounds. Or what of the one-legged, single-mindedly fierce Sergeant Muldspeen, John's teacher? What about the boy's great-great-aunt, Lady Euphemia Huffam, who could pay the debt but won't for reasons of her own? What about the secretive Mr. Snugsbe of All Hallows Church, who hides himself away in the City's most voluminous coat? Then there's Chief Inspector Ratchet of Scotland Yard, who is after somebody for some crime or other. True, John has a new friend and ally in Sary the Sneak...but what has even she got up her sleeve?

What John learns on his own is that there's a traitor on the loose, somewhere. And he must uncover the villain -- no matter who it might be.



Vocabulary

The Traitors' Gate

Imposter - a person who deceives others by pretending to be someone else

Mired - stuck in a very difficult situation

Disparagingly - to describe (someone or something) as unimportant, weak, bad, etc.

Impertinence - rude and showing a lack of respect

Accost - to approach and speak to (someone) often in an angry, aggressive, or unwanted way

Lamented - deeply missed, used to refer to someone who has died

Plight - a very bad or difficult situation

Gaunt - very thin usually because of illness or suffering

Predicament - a difficult or unpleasant situation

Unsavory - unpleasant or offensive

Ominous - suggesting that something bad is going to happen in the future

Calamity - an event that causes great harm and suffering

Divulge - to make (information) known, to give (information) to someone

Dour - serious and unfriendly

Askew - not straight, at an angle

Privy - a small outdoor building that is used as a toilet

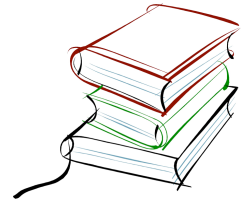
High Level Questions

The Traitors' Gate



These questions can be used to differentiate and scaffold instruction as a basis for class discussions, small group work, and/or extended individual writing assignments.

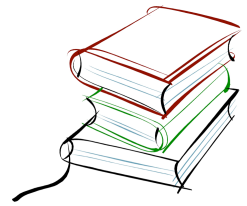
1. Analyze the mysteries surrounding 5 of the characters in this novel. Choose from Bridgett, Sary, Mr. Muldspeen, Mr. Farquatt, Mr. Nottingham, Wesley John Lewis Huffam, or Mr. Tuckum. Use the Character Puzzle graphic organizer to record your thoughts.
2. Defend John's father's actions of memorizing the rifling plans and planning to sell them.
3. Do you think Lady Euphemia not supporting John's father was a good or bad thing and why?
4. Do you think Sary's actions were right or wrong to get to Australia to find her father? Defend your opinion.
5. What do you imagine would have been the outcome if Mr. Nottingham had liked John's father?
6. John compared his life to upturning a stone and finding craziness. Explain something in your life that has been upturned.
7. John was finding it hard to trust anyone. Who do you think was the most honest person in the story and why.
8. Mr. Snugsbe spoke in 3rd person about himself and the coats we wear. What different coats do you wear?
9. Why was John surprised to see Mr. Muldspeen in Chapter 19, *I Seek Advice*?
10. In Chapter 21, John had a difficult decision to make about his father. Do you think he made the right choice?



Using Choice Boards

Choice boards give students the opportunity to participate in multiple tasks that allow them to practice skills they've learned in class or to demonstrate and extend their understanding of concepts. From the board, students either choose or are assigned tasks to complete. Individual tasks address learning style modalities.

To scaffold the activities for struggling readers, teachers can modify the tasks using the blank template provided or give more details for performance criteria. Some teachers like to assign point values for the different tasks.

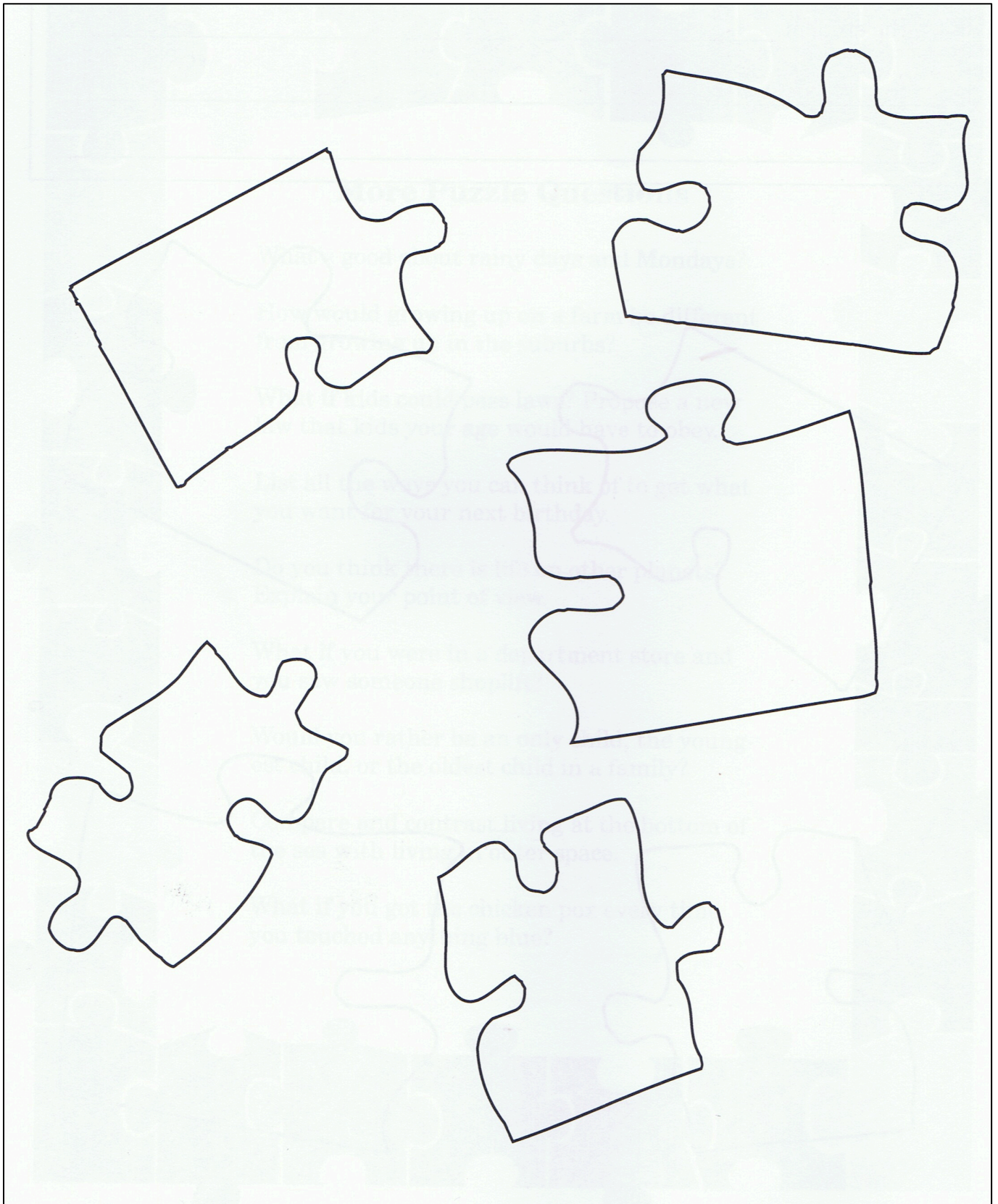


Choice Board

The Traitors' Gate

In chapter 31, <i>I Learned the Truth</i>, write a comparison of your feelings and John's feelings about his father.	Turn a scene from Chapter 45, <i>I Make an Astounding Discovery</i>, into a play with the help of others in your class and perform.	Pretend you're a court reporter who observed the scene in the Debtors' Court. Create an oral advertisement of the tale you will be telling that night in the Den of the Red Lion. Come one, come all.....
Create a diorama of the Rookery of St. Giles.	Write 5 rhyming couplets to continue the song John's father sings about money.	Use watercolors to paint your favorite scene from the novel.
John and other characters in the story all have opinions about Sary. Working with a partner, create a list of facts and opinions about Sary.	Create a bulleted list of details about London during the time of the novel.	Act out a scene between Mr. Farquatt and Clarissa.

The Traitors' Gate Character Puzzles



Choice Board





Using a RAFT Matrix

A RAFT matrix enhances students' comprehension of novels they're reading and information they're learning. It also provides a fun way to encourage student writing. RAFT is an acronym for *role*, *audience*, *format*, and *topic*:

- **Role.** The role is the person or people the student becomes for this project. Sometimes students take on the role of a book character, historical figure, or contemporary personality, such as Peyton Manning, and at other times, they are themselves.
- **Audience.** The audience is the person or people who will read or view this project. They may include students, teachers, parents, or community members, as well as simulated audiences, such as book characters and historical personalities.
- **Format.** The format is the genre or activity that students create. It might be a letter, brochure, cartoon, journal, poster, essay, newspaper article, speech, or digital scrapbook.
- **Topic.** The topic pertains to the book. It may be an issue related to the book, an essential question, or something of personal interest.

RAFT is an effective way to differentiate instruction by providing tiered activities. The BSCSR RAFT matrices are scaffold and can be adjusted according to students' achievement levels, English proficiency, and interests.

RAFT Matrix

The Traitors' Gate



Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Sary's father	Sary	Letter	What life is like in Australia
Inspector Ratchet	His supervisors	Weekly report	His suspicions about a couple of the characters
Bridgett	Mr. O'Doul	Secret message	About the family going to prison
John	Sary	Note in a bottle	Wondering if she would be coming back and what had been happening

RAFT Matrix Rubric



STUDENT NAME: _____ **NOVEL:** _____

Accuracy

Information is accurate and supported with specific details from the novel.

Comments:

Role

The writing is credible in the role assigned.

Comments:

Format

The proper format was used.

Comments:

Conventions

The writing had no errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling.

Comments:

Creativity

Writing shows imagination and originality.

Comments:

Assessment Guide

5 = Above and Beyond

4 = Meeting Standard

3 = Working to Standard

2 = Developing

1 = Incomplete

RAFT Matrix



Role	Audience	Format	Topic

Extended Resources

The Traitors' Gate



Kid friendly writing rubrics and checklists Grades 3-6

<http://allwritewithme.com/for-teachers/kid-friendly-writing-rubrics-checklists/>

Traitors' Gate Background

<http://www.ancientfortresses.org/traitors-gate.htm>

Background on Debtors' Prisons

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debtors%27_prison

Background on England

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/england.html>

Debtors' Prisons

Prior to the mid 19th century men and women in England were routinely imprisoned for debt at the pleasure of their creditors, sometimes for decades. They would often take their families with them, the only alternative for the women and children being uncertain charity outside the gaol. Entire communities sprang up inside the debtors' prisons, with children born and raised there. Other European countries had legislation limiting imprisonment for debt to one year, but debtors in England were imprisoned until their creditors were satisfied, however long that took. When the Fleet Prison closed in 1842, some debtors were found to have been there for thirty years.

A debtor could be worse off after a few years in prison than when he or she entered. Because prisons were privately administered, whole economies were created around their inhabitants, with the prison keepers charging rent, bailiffs charging for food and clothing, attorneys charging legal fees in fruitless efforts to get the debtors out, and creditors, often tradesmen, increasing the debt simply because the debtor was in gaol. Debts could accumulate to the point where there was no realistic prospect of release.

A few prisons, such as the Fleet, catered only for debtors but most were sent to prisons that housed a mix of petty and vicious criminals, though they were kept in separate wings. Newgate, for instance, was used to imprison those awaiting execution after the gallows was moved there from Tyburn in 1783. For much of the 19th century Newgate was London's main prison and public executions outside the building drew large crowds. It was not until 1868 that executions were moved inside Newgate, Michael Barrett being the last person to be publicly executed in Great Britain on 26 May 1868.



Apart from Newgate and the Fleet, other London prisons that housed debtors included Coldbath Fields Prison, King's Bench Prison and Marshalsea Prison. Marshalsea dated back to the 14th century and was situated in Southwark on the south bank of the Thames. Its prisoners were varied: men awaiting court martial, political figures and intellectuals accused of sedition and of course, debtors.

If you were a prisoner with money at Marshalsea, you could visit its shop and restaurant as well as be allowed out during the day to earn money to satisfy your creditors. Without money, you were crammed into one of nine small rooms with dozens of others. A parliamentary committee reported in 1729 that 300 inmates had starved to death within a three-month period, and that eight to ten prisoners were dying every twenty four hours in the warmer weather.



The prison became known around the world through the writings of Charles Dickens, whose father was sent there in 1824 for a debt to a baker. He was forced to leave school at the age of twelve for a job in a blacking factory in order to help keep his family at the Marshalsea. Dickens based several of his characters on his experiences, most notably Amy Dorrit and her father, also a Marshalsea debtor. After most of the prison was demolished in the 1840s, Dickens wrote, 'It is gone now and the world is none the worse without it.'

Research Simulation Tasks and Literary Analysis Tasks Rubric

Construct Measured	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	Score Point 0
Reading Comprehension of Key Ideas and Details	The student response demonstrates full comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially by providing an accurate analysis and supporting the analysis with effective textual evidence.	The student response demonstrates comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a mostly accurate analysis and supporting the analysis with adequate textual evidence.	The student response demonstrates limited comprehension of ideas by providing a minimally accurate analysis and supporting the analysis with limited textual evidence.	The student response demonstrates no comprehension of ideas by providing inaccurate or no analysis and little to no textual evidence.
Writing Written Expression	The student response - addresses the prompt and provides effective development of the topic that is consistently appropriate to the task by using clear reasoning and relevant, text-based evidence; - demonstrates effective coherence, clarity, and cohesion appropriate to the task; - uses language effectively to clarify ideas, attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.	The student response - addresses the prompt and provides some development of the topic that is generally appropriate to the task by using reasoning and relevant, text-based evidence; - demonstrates coherence, clarity, and cohesion appropriate to the task; - uses language to clarify ideas, attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.	The student response - addresses the prompt and provides minimal development of the topic that is limited in its appropriateness to the task by using limited reasoning and text-based evidence; or - is a developed, text-based response with little or no awareness of the prompt; - demonstrates limited coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion appropriate to the task; - uses language that demonstrates limited awareness of the norms of the discipline.	The student response - is undeveloped and/or inappropriate to the task; lacks coherence, clarity, and cohesion; - uses language that demonstrates no clear awareness of the norms of the discipline.
Writing Knowledge of Language and Conventions	The student response to the prompt demonstrates full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage, but meaning is clear .	The student response to the prompt demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding , but the meaning is generally clear .	The student response to the prompt demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that often impede understanding .	The student response to the prompt demonstrates no command of the conventions of standard English. Frequent and varied errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage impede understanding .

Narrative Tasks Rubric

Construct Measured	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	Score Point 0
Writing Written Expression	The student response • is effectively developed with narrative elements and is consistently appropriate to the task; • demonstrates effective coherence, clarity, and cohesion appropriate to the task; • uses language effectively to clarify ideas, attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.	The student response • is developed with some narrative elements and is generally appropriate to the task; • demonstrates coherence, clarity, and cohesion appropriate to the task; • uses language to clarify ideas, attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.	The student response • is minimally developed with few narrative elements and is limited in its appropriateness to the task; • demonstrates limited coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion appropriate to the task; • uses language that demonstrates limited awareness of the norms of the discipline.	The student response • is undeveloped and/or inappropriate to the task; • lacks coherence, clarity, and cohesion; • use of language demonstrates no clear awareness of the norms of the discipline.
Writing Knowledge of Language and Conventions	The student response to the prompt demonstrates full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage, but meaning is clear.	The student response to the prompt demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding, but the meaning is generally clear.	The student response to the prompt demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that often impede understanding.	The student response to the prompt demonstrates no command of the conventions of standard English. Frequent and varied errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage impede understanding.