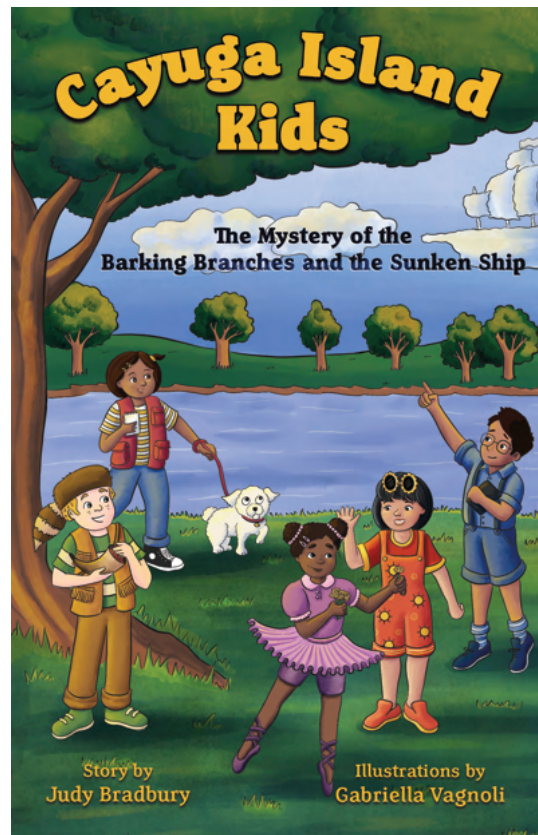


Cayuga Island Kids

Book One

The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship

Educator Guide



Cross Your Fingers, a City of Light Publishing imprint, 2021

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*Common Core State Standards addressed by the questions and activities
in this guide are noted throughout.*

About the Cayuga Island Kids series

The Cayuga Island Kids is a lively chapter book series intended for ages 7-9; Grades 1-3. The stories center on five kids who live on a residential island a few miles upstream of Niagara Falls. In the books, the friends embark on adventures and solve mysteries. They learn and grow as a result of their experiences. Though the stories are fictional, the books in the series touch on history, science, research skills, and friendship. The stories are anchored by social-emotional themes. Each of the Cayuga Island Kids has a distinct personality and personal interests, but they are all big-hearted, curious, adventurous, and funny.

About the Author



Judy Bradbury is an author, award-winning literacy advocate and educator, and host of the popular Children's Book Corner blog. She is also a Cayuga Island kid. Judy grew up on the island, which is located a few miles upstream from the mighty Niagara Falls. In the summers, she rode the bicycle her father built

for her across the island in search of mysteries to solve. Judy loves sharing her books with students and leading writing workshops. Learn more at www.judybradbury.com. IG: judy_bradbury; Twitter: @JudyBwrites

About the Illustrator

Although she has always loved to draw, **Gabriella Vagnoli** became an illustrator via a circuitous route that allowed her to explore many other interests including theater, music, teaching, and languages. Her work in these fields all had a common thread: communication. And this is what she loves best about illustrating children's books—the opportunity to visually communicate a story in a way that will indelibly imprint it on young minds, just as she still has with her the illustrated stories from her childhood in Italy.



Book One: *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*

About the Book

In the first book in the Cayuga Island Kids series, readers meet five resourceful friends who live on a residential island. Although the story is fictional, *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* is loosely based on one of the most intriguing unsolved mysteries of the Great Lakes: the sinking of the never-recovered sailing vessel, the Griffon, in the 1600s. Readers will encounter history, science, mystery, research skills, social-emotional themes, humor, friendship, and a really, really cute dog.

Target Ages/Grades: Ages 7-9; Grades 1-3.

Praise for the book:

“Any book that begins with a map of an island is my kind of story. Enliven that setting with a diverse group of characters who are consistently kind—and bursting with curiosity—and you’ve got all the elements of a series that is alive with adventure, friendship, and mystery.”

—James Preller, author of the *Jigsaw Jones* mystery series

“Likeable kids use their distinctive personalities and particular interests to solve mysteries. Good fun and gentle humor abound. Author Judy Bradbury subtly guides readers in how to research a subject of interest. Gabriella Vagnoli’s lively illustrations show that the children are as diverse as their interests.”

—Vivian Vande Velde, Edgar Award-winner and author of *Twitch the Squirrel* books

“The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship is a delight! There is SO MUCH packed into this amazing chapter book! Rich information is woven throughout the story. The characters learn about nature, history, science, math, geography, explorers, rhyming words, vocabulary (i.e. archives, primary sources), and more... a tome that encourages curiosity, learning, and fun! As a teacher, I love this realistic fiction story because it would be a great guided reading or shared reading text. Children in primary grades (1-3) would love this book as an independent reading selection. It would be a great book for cross-curricular learning since there is science, social studies, and math woven throughout! I can see many extension activities for teachers or parents to use with readers.”

—Kirsten Burke Smith, M.S.Ed.
President-Elect, New York State Reading Association
2019 NYSRA Literacy Educator of the Year
Past President, Niagara Frontier Reading Council

Directed Reading Activity

Pre-Reading



Examine the book cover

Ask children what they notice about the cover. Details to note include: the *characters*, the *setting*, the season of the year, and the names of the *author* and *illustrator* of the book. Children may notice the ship in the clouds. If they do, compliment the close eye. Ask them to hold that thought for a moment. Return to discuss after you read the book title.

Read the series title

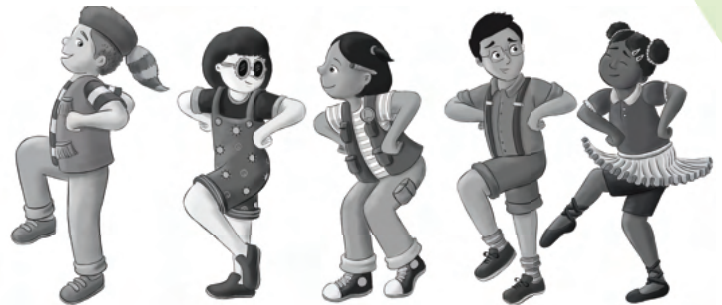
What does **Cayuga Island Kids** tell the reader about the setting?

Read the book title

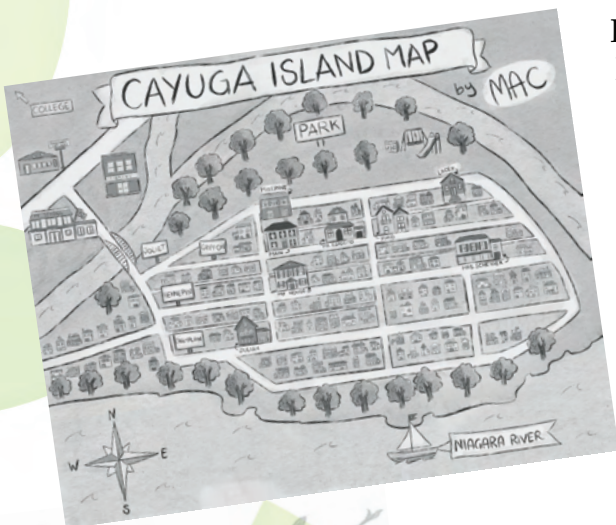
Discuss: What is a *mystery*? What is a *sunken ship*? Ask children to predict: What do you think this book is about? What do you think the *barking branches* might refer to? Elicit/return to discovery of the ship in the clouds on the cover. Why might the ship be illustrated in the clouds? Log predictions to return to as the story unfolds.

Consider the cast of characters

Take a close look at the Cayuga Island Kids on the cover. Draw attention to details. What do we know about the characters from the illustration? What would you like to find out about each of these children? Turn to the double-spread illustration of the characters at the front of the book. Note the Cayuga Island Kids' names. Generate a Cast of Characters list to return to after reading Chapter 1, and later.



Study the map

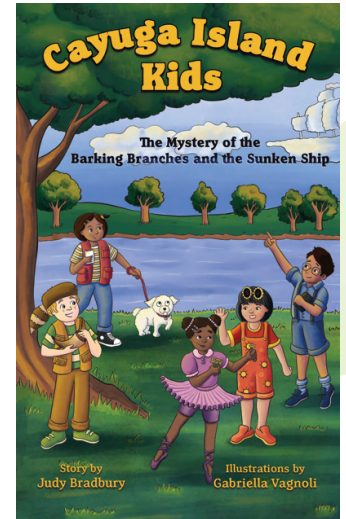


Read the introduction, "Cayuga Island." Open to the map. Examine the details. Ask students where on the map the front cover illustration would be. Where is the bridge? Find the streets named after the explorers and the ship. Notice the labeled homes. What questions does the map raise that you hope will be answered in the story? Generate a list to return to later.

Read to Find Out

Review with students the questions they have about the book. Record their responses to return to later. Read to find out.

Pre-reading questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL 1.1; 1.5; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 2.1; 2.7; 3.1. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6.



While Reading

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1 "The Cayuga Island Kids"

The Cayuga Island Kids are introduced to readers. Following the reading of this chapter, ask students to add details to the Cast of Characters list that was generated in the Before Reading Activity.

Chapter 2 "Mystery or Hunt?"

The Cayuga Islands Kids are looking for a dogwood tree. They discuss whether looking for one is a mystery, a hunt, or an adventure. What do you see as the difference between a mystery, a hunt, and an adventure?

The Cayuga Island Kids disagree at first, but then they bring their ideas and opinions together. What do you learn about the kids from their discussion? Think about ways we can do that in our classroom, at recess, and in the cafeteria.

Chapter 3 "Clues"

The Cayuga Island Kids list the clues they think will help them find a dogwood. Discuss the differences between the facts and clues they choose and those they don't.

How does each of the Cayuga Island Kids respond to the prospect of a hunt for a dogwood tree? Which character's response is most like what yours would be?

Chapter 4 "Expert"

Readers are introduced to Mrs. Schieber. What do we learn about the Cayuga Island Kids' neighbor? Encourage students to delve into the details in this chapter to form a profile of this character.

Julian mentions that in his research of dogwoods he remembered to check more than one source, just as Mrs. Schieber has taught her students. Why is this important?

Chapter 5 "Details" Chapter 5 "Details"

Discuss the Cayuga Island Kids' resourcefulness in "thinking outside the box" to figure out what 20-30 feet looks like.

Chapter 6 "The Hunt Begins"

The Cayuga Island Kids now have a plan. Review details. What is different as a result of their visit with Mrs. Schieber?

Reread the last three sentences of the chapter (pg. 33). Predict what might happen next.

Chapter 7 "Buddies"

Why did Lacey think Julian was the perfect buddy? Why did Mac think Julian was the perfect buddy? How and why do the friends' thoughts change by the end of the chapter?

Maya and Yoko discover something in the park. Ask students to predict what it might be.

 **Chapter 8 "A Bump in the Park"**

Discuss how the two teams continue their hunt. How has the hunt changed?

Predict what might happen next.

 **Chapter 9 "Buried Treasure"**

Trace the events in this chapter from uncovering the ball to deciding it might be a cannonball. How did the Cayuga Island Kids use clues to help them make that guess?

 **Chapter 10 "Digging and Digging"**

Readers meet Mr. Esposito. At first the Cayuga Island Kids' neighbor is upset by what he sees. Then he becomes surprised and amazed. Gradually, he is as eager to dig up the cannonball as the students. Discuss this scene and the way that the author uses details to convey what Mr. Esposito is thinking and feeling and how those thoughts and feelings change.

 **Chapter 11 "Investigation"**

Lacey takes a flake that falls from the ball and carefully wraps it in a tissue. Why do you think Lacey does this? Is Lacey the most likely character to do this? Why?

Readers meet Miss Lynne. What do we learn about this neighbor?

Ask students to predict what will happen next.

 **Chapter 12 "Primary Sources"**

Identify details of the college library mentioned in the text.

Take note of the details in the illustration. Compare.

Discuss primary sources.

At the end of this chapter, the Cayuga Island Kids are curious about much more than they were when they arrived at the library. Review what questions the Cayuga Island Kids have. Ask students if they have ever intended to find out about one thing and as they learned about it, found that it led to more questions. Discuss.

 **Chapter 13 "Narrow the Search"**

How do we know that the Cayuga Island Kids are getting tired? Why do you think the Cayuga Island Kids are losing their steam? Discuss. Compare to personal experiences.

 **Chapter 14 "Is It Important?"**

The Cayuga Island Kids work together to sift through the facts to determine what is important to their research about the cannonball. Discuss their process.

What fact is most interesting to you?

 **Chapter 15 "Day Two"**

Each of the Cayuga Island Kids has different ideas as they think about the cannonball and the Griffon. Discuss.

Chapter 16 "Rainy Day, Bright Ideas"

The Cayuga Island Kids work together to determine what they need to help them solve the mystery of the maybe-cannonball. Discuss their teamwork. Why is teamwork helpful? What do the Cayuga Island Kids do that makes their teamwork successful?

Chapter 17 "Teamwork"

How are the Cayuga Island Kids “narrowing the search”? Do you think they are making progress?

How has Mr. Esposito helped the children so far in the story? Do you think his friend Dr. Sylvia Spina will be able to help figure out if the ball is a cannonball and if it is from the Griffon?

Reread the definition in the context of the meaning of *archaeology* and *archaeologist* (page 99). Discuss what students know about these terms.

What do you think will happen next?

Chapter 18 "Questions"

Each of the Cayuga Island Kids waits in excitement to meet Dr. Spina. Discuss how the details the author has provided help us know the characters better.

Chapter 19 "An Afternoon of Answers"

Readers meet Dr. Spina. What do we learn about this character?

Discuss how the author shows the reader how eager and anxious the Cayuga Island Kids are to find out what Dr. Spina thinks.

Review what the Cayuga Island Kids learn from Dr. Spina. Discuss their reactions. How would you feel if you were with the kids?

Chapter 20 "Mystery Solved"

Discuss the ending of the story. How do the Cayuga Island Kids feel? How do you know?

Were you surprised by the final scene? Do you think the title fits the story? Discuss.



While Reading questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 1.10; 2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.10; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.9; 3.10. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6. LS: 1.1; 2.1; 3.1. FS: 1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 2.3; 2.4; 3.3; 3.4. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.

Vocabulary / Use of Language

Discuss how to use context and illustrations in the story to help figure out the meaning of unknown or challenging words. Encourage readers to use context clues. Examples from the story: In Chapter 11 “Investigation” Mac does not know what the word *hefty* means. He figures it out. Readers can too, from the context. The word *artifacts* is directly defined on pages 60-61, as is *biased* on page 62, and *archaeology* on page 99.

Discuss real-life connections to new words to help increase retention.

Ask students to keep a list of unfamiliar words they find in the story. Words may include:

scampered (pg. 7) tiara (pg. 11) caption (pg. 13) bracts (pg. 13)
poisonous (pg. 17) investigate (pg. 19) trowel (pg. 28) sustenance (pg. 32) doomed
(pg. 36) hefty (pg. 51) archives (pg. 55) artifacts (pg. 60) inaccurate (pg. 62) biased (pg. 62) plaque (pg. 63)
prow (pg. 64) credible (pg. 76) archaeology, archaeologist (pg. 99) hieroglyphics (pg. 106)

Use context clues and then check definitions in a dictionary.

What synonyms might you use for this word?

Vocabulary/Acquisition of Language questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4. LS: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4.

After Reading

Extension Activities, Additional Learning Experiences, and Cross-Curricular Connections

Getting Ideas—and Working with Ideas to Create Stories

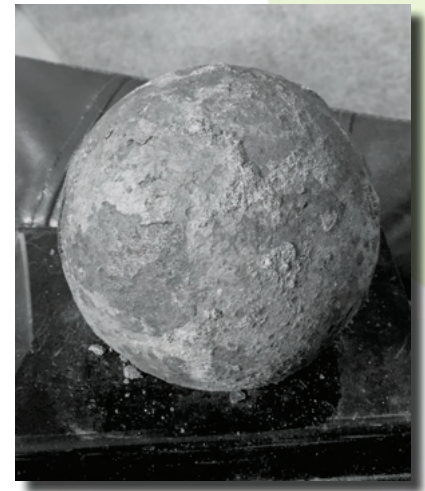
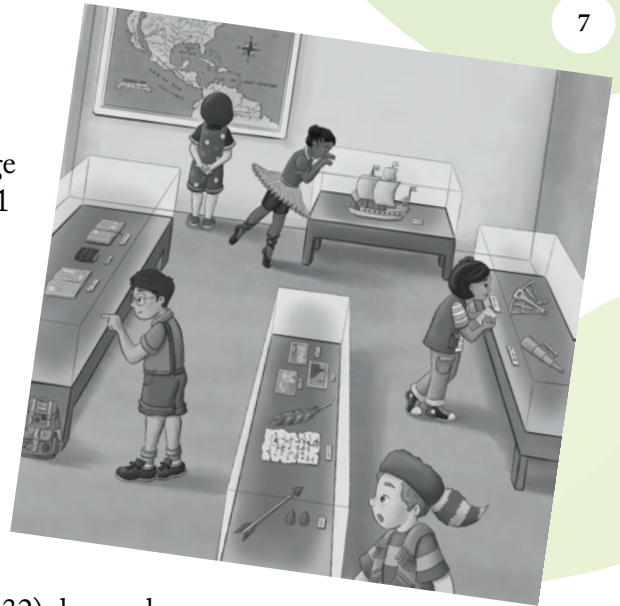
Where Did the Idea for *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* Come From?

Read the following to students:

This is a message from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*“The story for **The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship** began with a real life event. That event was so intriguing it was covered in a newspaper article in the Niagara Gazette, the local newspaper published in Niagara Falls, NY. The story’s headline read, “Explosive Find.” The story told about a cannonball discovered in the backyard of a history teacher and resident of Cayuga Island. His backyard is directly across from Jayne Park and the site where the sailing vessel, the Griffon, was believed to have been built in 1679. Perhaps the most intriguing mystery of the Great Lakes surrounds the Griffon. It sank soon after it was built. Even though more than a million dollars has been spent hunting across the Great Lakes for the lost ship, it has never been found.*

My cousin Lynne Scalia sent the Niagara Gazette article to me in January 2015, with a note that said, “Thought you would enjoy reading this article.” She was right. I grew up on Cayuga Island, which is a few miles upstream from the mighty Niagara Falls, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. (Lynne grew up there, too. We lived a couple of blocks from one another.)



*That newspaper article started me thinking. Was there the seed of a story for children here? Several months later, I began writing. I met and interviewed Mike Esposito. I saw the cannonball. I went home and wrote some more. After several revisions over a couple of years, I sent my story to a publisher I thought would be interested in it. I was right, and when she accepted the manuscript, she asked me if I would create more stories about the characters. That's how *The Cayuga Island Kids* series began.*

Share the [Niagara Gazette](#) article.

What information in the article is most interesting? Does it make you curious enough that you want to learn more? If you had a chance to interview Mike Esposito, what would you ask him?

An informative episode on Season 6 of *Expedition Unknown* on Discovery Channel covers the history and the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the Griffon. "Ghost Ship of the Great Lakes" features Josh's search "for one of North America's most sought-after shipwrecks." (41 minutes; premiered 5/8/19)

Author's Note

Read the Author's Note "Is This Story Fact or Fiction?" at the back of the book. Share the photo of the actual cannonball. Discuss.

Dedication

Read the dedication. Discuss what a book dedication is. Why do you think the author Judy Bradbury dedicated *The Mystery of the Barking Branches* and *the Sunken Ship* to Lynne Scalia?

The Cast of Characters



Read the following to students:

This is a message from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*"The **characters** in the Cayuga Island Kids series are fictional, or made up. They come from my imagination. They are not real children or adults, but some of their **characteristics** are based on real people. That means parts of the characters' personalities, their interests and activities, what they say, think, treasure, and even the food they eat, are based on people I know, things I have observed, or conversations I have had or overheard. I created written **character sketches**, or notes, on the characters. The illustrator of the book, Gabriella Vagnoli, added details in the pictures to help readers identify and get to know each of the Cayuga Island Kids and the other characters in the book."*

Readers get to know characters through their actions, words, and thoughts. Employ close reading techniques to uncover details of the Cayuga Island Kids' personalities, interests, favorite activities, things they treasure, and even the food they eat.



Have students use a grid to develop character sketches of the Cayuga Island Kids and the other characters in the book. On the grid place the characters' names on one axis. On the other axis list categories, such as the following:

- What does the character look like?
- What does the character say?
- What does the character do?
- What does the character think?
- What thing does the character treasure and/or what activity does the character enjoy?
- What do other characters say and/or think about the character?



Thinking Deeper

Ask students to respond to the following questions in writing, in a group discussion, or as reading partners.

- Which character do you like best? Why?
- Which character do you think is the funniest? Most creative? Most serious? Kindest? Why? Offer specific examples from the story.
- Which character is most like you? Explain. Offer details.
- Which character is least like you? Explain. Offer details.
- Which character would you most like to be friends with? Why? What do you imagine you would enjoy doing together?
- Which adult character do you like best? Why? Explain, offering details from the story.
- Compare and contrast two of the characters in the story. How are they alike? How are they different? Be specific. Use details from the story.

Story Craft:

- How do the author and illustrator convey information about the character?
- What parts of the character's personality are best shown in the pictures? Which are best shown in the words?



Thinking Beyond

Ask students to imagine what each of the characters in the book would choose to do in the following situations. Ask students to provide evidence from the story to support their opinion.

- How would the character choose to spend a snow day or another day off from school?
- What would the character do if he or she lost a library book?
- What might make the character laugh? Become angry? Excited? Sad?
- What could you count on this character to do?
- What would this character most likely NEVER do?
- What might be this character's favorite animal? Food? TV show? Type of book? Activity?
- On what would this character spend his or her allowance or birthday money?
- What is one question you would like to ask this character? What do you imagine the answer would be?

Thinking Creatively

Ask students to write a new scene for *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*. What happens? The scene should have a beginning, middle, and an end. Use plenty of details to help your reader imagine the place, hear the words and see how they are delivered, and witness the character's actions.

Ask students to create a new character to join the Cayuga Island Kids.

- Create a **character sketch**.
- Choose one of the following:
 - Write a scene involving the character.
 - Draw an illustration of the character.



Include details that will help readers get to know the character's personality and interests.

Character-related questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.1, 1.3, 1.7; 2.1, 2.3, 2.7. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.

How Do You Say That?

Readers often wonder how to pronounce names.

The illustrator of the book, **Gabriella Vagnoli**, was born in Italy. Her last name is pronounced (von NYO lee) Do not pronounce the *g*. Spend a little extra time on the *n*.

Mrs. Schieber is a neighbor of the Cayuga Island Kids and the school librarian. Her name is pronounced (SHE-ber)

The Setting of the Story:

Read the following to students:

This message is from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*“The **setting** of **The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship** is real. It is located exactly where it says it is in the story. I’ve modified the island a bit to fit the story, but overall, it is pretty much the way it is described. I grew up on Cayuga Island. My father built the house I lived in on Griffon Avenue.*

*“Changing a real place a bit is something an author might do to help tell a made-up or **fictional** story in a clearer way. In informational or factual writing, facts are **NEVER** changed. If something is added that **MIGHT** have happened or **MIGHT** have been said, the story is **BASED** on a true event.*

*“Fiction books based on history are not history books; they are works of the imagination. In good fiction based on historical fact, you will find all sorts of details that help history come alive. I hope **The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship** does this for you.”*



The Facts: The Sunken Ship

The Griffon was a real ship. It was built on Cayuga Island in 1679 for the purpose of fur-trading. The Griffon sailed across the Great Lakes. On an early voyage, the ship sank and has never been found. It remains one of the greatest mysteries of the Great Lakes.

Want to learn more? Just like the Cayuga Island Kids, students can conduct research in their school or public library and online. Recall what Mrs. Schieber recommends. Always check more than one source to make sure facts are accurate and current. Be certain online sources are safe to visit and reliable.

Here are some ideas:

- Review the facts the Cayuga Island Kids gathered in their research. Which fact is most interesting to you? Why? Learn more about it.
- Find out more about the Griffon.
 - Which facts would you include in a report on the Griffon?
- Which Niagara Frontier explorer would you like to learn more about?
 - Choose one to research.
 - Check more than one source.
 - Collect five of the most interesting facts.
 - Write a mini report.
 - Share.

The Facts: The Barking Branches

Read the following to students:

This message is from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*“I have a dogwood tree in my front yard. The idea to put the dogwood tree in my story began with a question: **Why is this tree called a dogwood?** I began to look for an answer.*

“That question led to another, and another, and another. I read to find out. This is called research. Learning about dogwoods was interesting and fun! Along the way, I learned what the trees were used for hundreds of years ago. I found a very odd and interesting fact about barking branches. That first question and my research led to the dogwood tree being part of my story and part of the title.

“I also learned there are many varieties of dogwood trees. Some grow well in the area of the country where I live, and others grow better in other parts of the country. Since the illustrator of Cayuga Island Kids series lives in a different part of the United States than I do, I visited a nursery. I wanted to take photos of a dogwood tree that would grow on Cayuga Island so I could send them to the illustrator to help with the drawings. Only there was one problem—actually two—one sort of small problem and one a little bigger, and definitely more unusual!

“The small problem: It was winter when the illustrator was drawing the dogwood for the book. When I visited the gardening center, I realized that of course no dogwood trees were in bloom, or even leafed out, for me to photograph. I would have to wait until spring to take a photograph of a leafy dogwood tree.

“The bigger problem: By the time dogwood trees that grow in my area were in bloom, we were in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. All the nurseries were closed. We had to rely on the internet and my photos of the type of dogwood trees that grow on Cayuga Island. More research.”

“Research often leads from one question to many questions. It can also lead to stories.”

“Now it’s your turn. Learn more about dogwood trees—and barking branches!”

Like Julian in the story, many students enjoy reading nonfiction. Others will benefit from being introduced to compelling age-appropriate informational books. Browse [Epic](#). Peruse read-aloud suggestions such as those collated by children’s author [Kate Messner](#), and those featured on [Kid Lit TV](#) and [We Are Teachers](#) and publishers’ teacher pages. Select nonfiction related to topics in this book. Follow up read-alouds by asking students to identify unanswered questions they have about the topic. Provide online resources for students to investigate. Have students share their findings in large or small group discussions and/or via video platforms.

The Plot

View the trailer for the *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* (youtu.be/E86RjENRG6s). Discuss what the creators chose to highlight. Does the trailer get you interested in reading the book? How? What do you learn about the story from this short clip? Use the trailer to help students write a concise summary of the book.

What happens at the beginning of the story? What activity are the Cayuga Island Kids engaged in? What happens that changes what the kids are focused on? What happens next? How do the Cayuga Island Kids work to solve the mystery of the ball? What happens at the end of the story?



Point of View

In *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* readers get “inside the heads” of each of the Cayuga Island Kids. They know their thoughts. Ask students to write a paragraph from the point of view of one of the adult characters. Let us know their thoughts. See especially Chapters 4, 10, 12, and 19. For an additional activity, see the Poetry section below.

In Chapter 18 “Questions” the Cayuga Island Kids wait in excitement to meet Dr. Spina. Imagine you are a character in the story. What would you be thinking about or doing?

Which character in the story are you most like? Why? Give examples to support your statement.

Reader's Theater

Students can participate in the story by reading orally from a script developed from text. Research on reader’s theater confirms its positive effect on reading fluency. Allow students sufficient time to become familiar with the text and to practice. This will offer the most benefit for improving fluency.

Students can perform reader’s theater for classmates in person or on a video conferencing platform. Reader’s theater is also an excellent family activity. In addition to teaming with classmates, students might invite family members to participate or connect with extended family members via video platforms.

Dialogue is best suited for reader's theater scripts. Several scenes in *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* lend themselves to reader's theater scripts. Suggestions include:

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 11, pp.54-57
- Chapter 12, pp. 63-66
- Chapter 14
- Chapter 16, pp. 90-94
- Chapter 17, pp. 98-99

[Reading Rockets](#) provides further information on reader's theater.

Reader's theater activities are aligned with CCSS FS: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4.

Sequence of Events

Provide a list of events from Chapters 7-10 for students to put in the order in which they occur in the story.

Literature Circles

Student-led book groups, or literature circles, in which participants engage in conversations about a shared reading experience offer many benefits. There is no “right way” to conduct literature circles. A variety of methods exist; however, they share common skill sets: forming, asking, and responding to questions related to text; connecting in groups focused on discussing literature; engaging in respectful and meaningful discussion; setting agendas; and experiencing peer-driven, collaborative reading and learning experiences. See the resources listed below for more information. Begin by introducing components and features of literature circles as they will be conducted in your setting. Form small groups. Guide students in collaborating to create a schedule to read chapters of *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* and then meet to discuss general and/or specific aspects of the story. Review literature circle objectives and expectations; model acceptable group discussion behavior. Monitor and assess; provide feedback and guidance as needed.

Overview of Literature Circles: [Lit Circles Resource Center](#)

ReadWriteThink article: [Literature Circles With Primary Students](#)

[Literature Circles Resource Guide](#)

Writing

Much of *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* takes place in Cayuga Island Park. It is a favorite spot for the Cayuga Island Kids. Where do you like to hang out with your friends? Write a description. Be specific and give details. Illustrate your favorite place.

In Chapter 1 “The Cayuga Island Kids” details are provided about each of the kids. Read Maya’s introduction. Find the words that describe what she is wearing, what she is doing, and what she is thinking. How do details help you form images in your mind? Write a paragraph describing one of your friends or siblings. Help your readers form images in their minds about this person.



In Chapter 4 “Expert” Mrs. Schieber explains what looking for something hiding in plain sight means: “When you are hunting for suspects, pay attention to everything. Be observant. Notice every detail. You never know where you will find a clue.” Write about a time when you were searching for something. How did you go about looking for it? How did you finally find it? Was it hiding in plain sight?

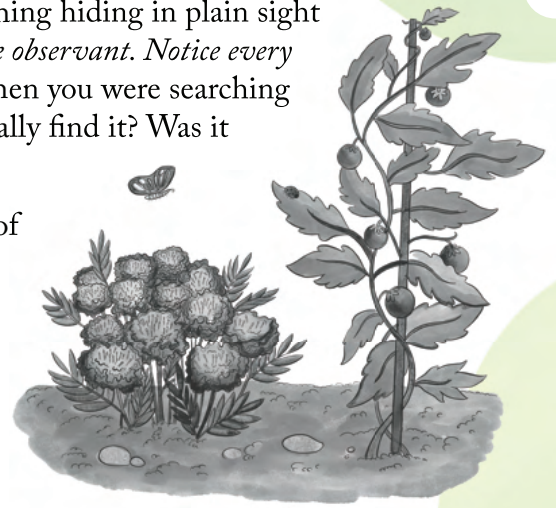
In Chapter 15 “Day Two” the author describes the rainy day from each of the characters’ points of view. Close read for descriptions that appeal to your senses. Note how they are different for each character. Next, write your own paragraph describing a rainy day. Be descriptive.

In Chapter 18, Maya makes a thank you card for Dr. Spina. Imagine you are Maya. What would you write in the note?

In Chapter 19 “An Afternoon of Answers” the author describes the characters’ facial expressions and gestures to convey how they are feeling.

Close read to identify these. Then write a paragraph describing how someone is feeling without telling the reader directly. Read aloud to classmates to see if they can identify the feeling. Feelings might be: sad, glad, excited, gloomy, sick, anxious, surprised, angry, fearful, tired, confused, or distracted.

In Chapter 20 “Mystery Solved” Miss Lynne uses the phrase “batten down the hatches.” Read to find out what this saying means and its origin. Or, as a class collect sayings and read to find out more about what they mean and their origins. Write up, share with the class, and display.



Reading Journal

If students will be offered *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* as an independent reading choice, consider discussing the story via journaling. Journal discussions, or dialogue journals, are a way to motivate developing readers: feedback keeps interest and confidence in independent reading skills high. Students can engage in journal discussions with their teacher, librarian, classmates, or older students who act as reading mentors. Journal entries can be written and/or visual; they may be kept in traditional paper journals or online. Endeavor to respond at regular, frequent intervals. Encourage students to share their reading journals at home. Families can be encouraged to journal about their reading. Journal discussions also provide a terrific opportunity to connect with extended family members, especially those that children may not see or interact with frequently.

Read more about [Dialogue Journals](#).

Poetry

Yoko loves to rhyme! Throughout the story, she thinks up poems or rhymes words. Close read to find the instances in the story in which Yoko rhymes. Which is your favorite? Why? Choose a scene in the book and create a Yoko poem.

Ask students to reflect on each character’s personality and interests. Choose one character and create a poem. Will it rhyme like Yoko’s poems, or will it be written in free verse?

Close read *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* to find all of Yoko’s rhymes and poems. Choose your favorites and write a poem from these selections. What title will you give your poem?

Poems with two voices are created to be read aloud by two people. Sometimes lines are read simultaneously, and sometimes lines are read consecutively. Write a poem for two voices that compares and contrasts the points of view of two characters in *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*.



Poems for two voices can be found in the following collections:

- *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* by Paul Fleishman, illustrated by Eric Beddows (Newbery Medal)
- *Boom! Bellow! Bleat! Animal Poems for Two or More Voices* by Georgia Heard, illustrated by Aaron DeWitt
- *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* by John Ciardi, illustrated by Edward Gorey

See also the [National Writing Project lesson](#).

Author/Illustrator Study

An author/illustrator study is an engaging learning activity. It supports and broadens students' interest in books and their growth as readers, writers, and artists. This activity also strengthens research skills. Author/illustrator studies encourage students to learn more about the work of book creators, their writing or illustration process, and their personal interests. As a result of author/illustrator studies, book creators become dimensional; they become real to the reader.

Discuss and generate questions for which students are interested in finding answers. Visit author/illustrator websites. Guide students to notice connections in the author/illustrator's various works. Glean an author/illustrator's interests: what they value or are passionate about. Is this reflected in their writing? Learn about the author/illustrator's writing and/or illustrating process. Visit [Judy Bradbury's website](#) to learn about the author's background. Find photos of Judy's writing space and more information about her writing process under the [Frequently Asked Questions tab](#). Visit [Gabriella Vagnoli's website](#) to learn more about the illustrator of the Cayuga Island Kids series and her creative process.

Read more about Author/Illustrator Studies in this [Reading Rockets article](#).

Writing prompts are also offered in many of the other sections in this guide.

Writing questions and activities are aligned with CCSS W:1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.7; 2.8; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.8; 3.10. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6; LS 1.2; 2.2; 3.2.



Cross-Curricular Connections

The Arts

Which is your favorite illustration in *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*? Why?

Illustrate a key scene from the beginning, the middle, or the end of the story. Write a caption for the illustration.

Illustrate a scene in *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* that is not illustrated that you wish had been.

Create a diorama of Cayuga Island Park.

Choose a scene from the story. Create sock puppets and write dialogue. Reenact the scene.

Form teams. Have students choose a scene from the story to silently act out, or mime, exaggerating gestures and facial expressions. Perform for classmates. Can the class identify the scene? Suggestions: Chapters 5, 9, 10, 19

Have students draw a picture of their public library.

In Chapter 18, Maya makes thank you card for Dr. Spina. Design a thank you card for someone who has done something special for you. Write a special note. Deliver or send it!

Research the griffon (mythological creature) described on page 65 in Chapter 12 "Primary Sources."

Draw a picture of the griffon.

Social Studies

Maps

Find Cayuga Island on a map of Western New York.

- Compare the map in *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* with the real map of Cayuga Island.
- What is the same on each map? What is different?
- Using the map in the book, give directions for the best way to get from one of the character's homes to one of the following:
 - Cayuga Island Park
 - The Public Library
 - The College
 - Cayuga Drive School
 - Another character's home

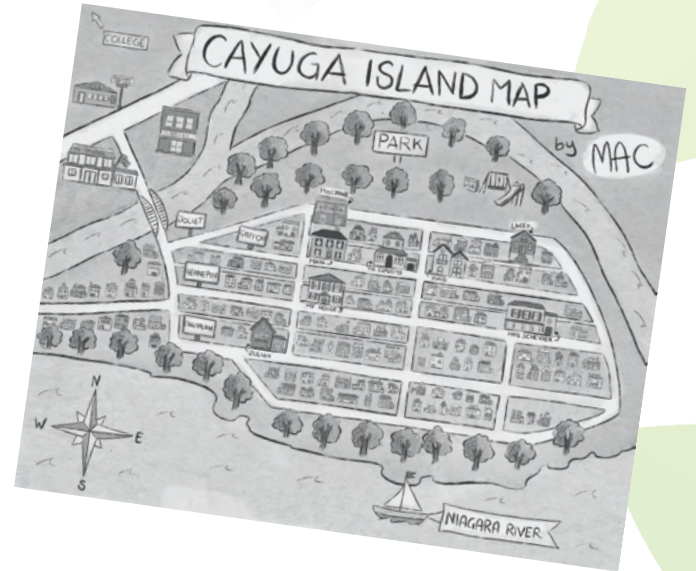
Using the map in the book as an example, have students draw a map of their neighborhood.

Have students write directions from one of the character's houses to another: shortest route, most scenic route, or path to follow if stopping to pick up a friend on the way.

Write directions for the path Mac takes in Chapter 1.

Take note of the details of the map in the college library on page 62 in Chapter 12 "Primary Sources."

Trace the path the Cayuga Island Kids take in the final chapter "Mystery Solved."



Research

In chapter 4 "Expert" Mrs. Schieber recommends to the Cayuga Island Kids, "Start with what you know, and think about what you need to find out." Discuss why this is good advice when researching a topic.

Primary Sources

The author of *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship* used first-hand accounts and other primary sources to pinpoint the real facts surrounding the disappearance of the Griffon. Students can conduct their own research.

In Chapter 12 "Primary Sources" the Cayuga Island Kids discuss primary sources with Miss Lynne. Reread this section and further discuss.

Discuss what artifacts are and why they are important.

Also in Chapter 12, the Griffon is described as it may have looked. Research images of the Griffon.

In Chapter 18 "Is It Important?" the Cayuga Island Kids review the notes they took at the library. Create a timeline of events surrounding the Griffon.

After Reading questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL:1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 1.10; 2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.10; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.9; 3.10. W:1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.7; 2.8 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.8; 3.10; SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6. LS: 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; IT: 1.5; 1.6; 1.7; 2.3; 2.5; 2.7; 2.9; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.7. FS: 1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 2.3; 2.4; 3.3; 3.4. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.

Science

In Chapter 2 “Mystery or Hunt” and Chapter 3 “Clues” the Cayuga Island Kids learn about dogwood trees. Research dogwoods. Check Julian’s facts. Find images of dogwoods. Which type of dogwoods would be found where the Cayuga Island Kids live? What types of dogwoods grow well where you live? What are common characteristics of dogwoods? How are they different?

In Chapter 15 “Day Two” we learn more about “gun puffing” and its history in making puffed cereals. Read to learn more about the process.

NGSS: S2-PS1-1; 2-LS4-1

Math

In Chapter 5 “Details” the Cayuga Island Kids use measurement, addition, multiplication, and comparison when determining what 20–30 feet looks like. Reenact this chapter, or ask children to use other forms of nontraditional measurement to determine the size of something.

Outside the Classroom

Visit a park in your neighborhood or area.

Visit a public library and/or a college library. Compare/contrast to your school library.

Social-Emotional Themes

Acceptance, commitment, compassion, concern, connection, creativity, curiosity, dedication, diligence, diversity, effort, empathy, empowerment, encouragement, fortitude, friendship, generosity of spirit, gentleness, gratitude, hope, interpersonal relationships, inspiration, helpfulness, integrity, kindness, loyalty, patience, perseverance, persistence, perspective, resilience, resourcefulness, respect, self-assurance, self-awareness, self-reliance, tenacity, trustworthiness, understanding.

Additional activity sheets and bonus material can be found at www.judybradbury.com and www.CityofLightPublishing.com.

The questions and activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades 1–3. Standards for other grades may also apply. For more information on the Common Core State Standards and to learn more about the individual standards listed in this guide, go to www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/. For more information on the Next Generation State Standards, go to www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/AllDCI.pdf.

This guide was created by Judy Bradbury, the author of the Cayuga Island Kids series. Judy is permanently certified by New York State in N-6; 7–9 English, and Reading. She holds a master’s degree in Reading Specialization and is the author of several professional resources for educators focusing on literacy. This guide was designed by Ana Cristina Ochoa.

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