

# Cayuga Island Kids

## Book Two

The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek

## Educator Guide



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



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## About the Cayuga Island Kids series

Cayuga Island Kids is a lively chapter book series intended for ages 7-10; Grades 1-3. The stories center on five friends who live on a residential island a few miles upstream from Niagara Falls. In each book, the characters embark on adventures and solve mysteries, learning and growing as a result of their experiences. Although the stories are fictional, the Cayuga Island Kids series touches on history, science, research skills, kindness, and friendship. The stories are anchored by social-emotional themes. Each of the characters in the Cayuga Island Kids series has a distinct personality and individual interests, but they are all big-hearted, curious, adventurous, kind, 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](http://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 Two: The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek

### About the Book

In the second book in the Cayuga Island Kids chapter book series, the five resourceful friends who live on this residential island continue their escapades. *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* is lively and fun contemporary fiction centered on themes relating to respect for our environment, recycling, reducing the use of single-use plastic, and the satisfaction that results from bringing a community together to work on a project. Readers will encounter science, mystery, research skills, history, teamwork, social-emotional themes, humor, friendship, a duck, and a few fish.

### Target Ages/Grades: Ages 7-10; Grades 1-3.

*Praise for the book:*

*"Judy does it again! The Cayuga Island Kids are a great group of friends who love to have fun, solve mysteries, and learn along the way. These delightfully curious community-minded kids are an inspiration. In **The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek** I love the community-based project and recycling theme: so timely and important. It's vital to let children know they have the power to make a difference. Families, teachers, and children will enjoy The Cayuga Island Kids series which taps into the natural curiosity of children and the world around them. There are many ways you can participate in story extension activities while enjoying The Cayuga Islands Kids' adventures: community-based service projects, library research, local history investigation, journal writing, interviews, field trips, science, and so much more. You will enjoy reading about the adventures of The Cayuga Island Kids and making connections where your kids can celebrate their community, too!"*

—MARY BETH SCUMACI, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ONLINE LEARNING, FORMER ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, MEDAILLE COLLEGE; FORMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

*"Judy Bradbury delivers an action-packed reading adventure filled with treasure troves celebrating community, historic discoveries, nature and the outdoors, friendship, and teamwork."*

—KIM KRUG, OWNER, MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO BOOKSTORE



## Directed Reading Activity

### Pre-Reading

#### 📖 Examine the book cover

Ask children what they notice about the cover.

Details include: the *characters*, the *setting*, the season of the year, and the names of the *author* and

*illustrator* of the book. Notice the plastic bottle Julian has fished from the creek. Ask students to predict what that might have to do with the story.

#### 📖 Read the series title

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

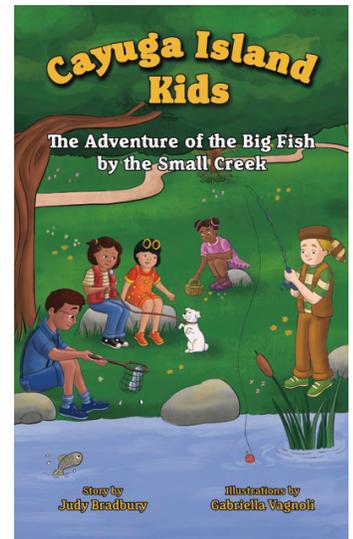
#### 📖 Read the book title

Discuss: What is an *adventure*? What is a *creek*? What do you think this book might be about? What do you think the big fish might be? What might a *big fish* have to do with the story? What other details from the cover offer clues about the story? What do you wonder about?

#### 📖 Consider the cast of characters

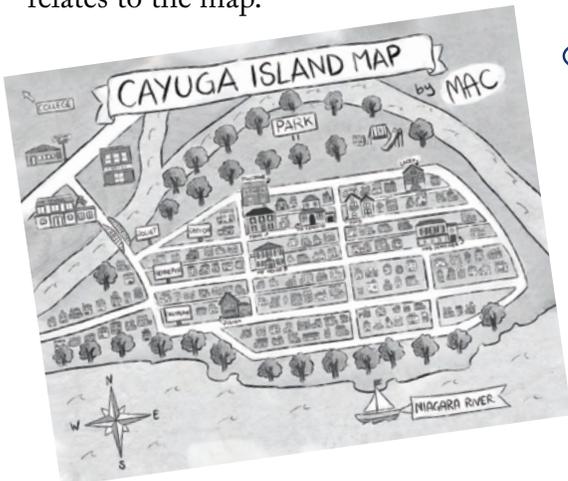
Look closely at the Cayuga Island Kids on the cover. Note clothing, personal items, and the various activities in which the characters are engaged. What do the details tell us about the characters? Reflect on how the cover offers the reader information about the characters' interests and/or personalities. What do you want to find out about each of these characters?

Which Cayuga Island Kid seems most interesting to you? Why? Open to the double-spread illustration of the cast of characters at the front of the book. Note the Cayuga Island Kids' names. Begin a Cast of Characters chart to return to after reading Chapter 1, and throughout the reading of the book. Log information about each of the Cayuga Island Kids characters as you progress through the book. For more details, see **The Cast of Characters** later in this guide.



#### 📖 Study the map

Open to the map at the front of the book. Note the details. Ask students where on the map the front cover illustration most likely would be located. Read the street names. Notice the labeled homes. What questions does the map raise that you hope will be answered in the story? Generate a list of questions to return to later. Read the introduction, "Cayuga Island." Return to the map. Discuss information learned from the introduction that relates to the map.



#### 📖 Book Trailer

View the trailer for the *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNqQmCdM8Sw>).

What do you notice? Does viewing the trailer generate interest in reading the book? Explain. What are you curious about?

#### 📖 Read to Find Out

Review questions students have generated about the story. Let's 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.*

Following the reading of this chapter, add details about each of the kids to the Cast of Characters chart that was generated in the Pre-Reading Activity.

#### Chapter 2 "The Alley on the Way to the Park"

*Lacey looks for clues in the alley. Pesky is busy, too.*

Review what Lacey and Pesky observe. Which observations seem ordinary? Does anything seem unusual? How is Lacey feeling as she walks through the alley? Why? How is Pesky feeling? How do you know?

At the end of the chapter, Lacey observes her friends up ahead in the park at the side of the creek. She senses something is wrong. What are the clues? What do you think is happening in the park?

#### Chapter 3 "A Six-Ring Problem"

*A duck is caught in a plastic ring.*

Do you think the Cayuga Island Kids can help? What would you do? What do you think the kids will do?

Consider having a six-pack plastic ring on hand to show the group. Discuss how this common plastic object can be dangerous to wildlife. Choose online images to share with students. For additional suggestions, refer to the **Science** activities found later in this guide.

#### Chapter 4 "Net Results"

*Mac helps set the mallard free. Two new characters are introduced.*

In the beginning of this chapter, Mac uses quick thinking to help set the duck free. The Cayuga Island Kids are happy and relieved. Discuss the friends' various actions and reactions. What do they tell us about each character?

The Cayuga Island Kids go from feeling happy and relieved to being concerned and troubled. Discuss.

Delve into chapter details to form profiles of the new characters introduced. Add them to the Cast of Characters chart.

#### Chapter 5 "Bird Brains"

*Mac lightens the mood.*

Ask students to close read to identify the comparisons and rhymes Yoko makes and the saying Lacey's grandmother uses.

Discuss how Mac turns a sour situation into lighthearted fun for his friends. Reflect on ways students can follow Mac's example in situations they encounter in the classroom, the lunch room, and on the playground.

#### Chapter 6 "An Idea to Share"

*Lacey has an idea for ridding the park of litter. On the way to meet with their friends, Lacey and Yoko encounter their neighbor and Cayuga Island Park volunteer, Mr. Esposito.*

Review the clues Yoko gathers when Lacey arrives at her door.

In the park, Yoko reflects, "Litter ruins shared spaces for everyone." Discuss.

Mr. Esposito says, “*When people realize the problems litter can cause, they understand the importance of cleaning up after themselves.*” Discuss.

Ask students to predict what Lacey’s idea for ridding the park of litter might be. What would you suggest the Cayuga Island Kids do?

Add Mr. Esposito to the Cast of Characters chart.

## Chapter 7 "A Stack of Facts"

*Mac and Julian enjoy fishing in the creek. The Cayuga Island Kids gather and review the facts before sharing ideas for how to rid the park and creek of litter.*

Compare and contrast what Mac and Julian enjoy about fishing. Do you have an activity that you enjoy with a friend? Do you both approach the activity in the same way, or do you do some things differently? Discuss.

## Chapter 8 "The Pesky Plan"

*The kids come up with a plan for a contest.*

Litter in Cayuga Island Park is a problem. The Cayuga Island Kids wonder if they can solve it. Julian says, “*Making a difference can catch on. One person becomes two and two becomes four. Pretty soon one becomes too many to count.*” What does Julian mean? Ask students to draw upon personal experiences to explain how change can begin with one person and grow to include many. (See **Writing Prompts** later in this guide for a related activity.)

How do the Cayuga Island Kids work together to devise a plan? Why do they name it the Pesky Plan?

What do you think might happen next?

## Chapter 9 "Nurdles"

*The Cayuga Island Kids research plastics and pollution. They discuss contest details.*

Which of the facts the Cayuga Island Kids learned did you find most surprising? Why?

Review what the kids learned about nurdles and their effects on wildlife. To delve into this further, refer to the **Science** activities and the list of related books of interest found later in this guide.

## Chapter 10 "Planning the Contest"

*The Cayuga Island Kids meet at Yoko’s house to plan the contest.*

What do you use every day that is made of plastic? What are examples of single-use plastic? How can we reduce use of single-use plastic?

How did each of the characters get busy on their part of the contest plan?

What problems are the characters facing as they work on the contest plan?

Mac senses two big problems with the contest. Discuss.

What do you think will happen next?

## Chapter 11 "Snacking on Ideas"

*The Cayuga Island Kids work on ideas for the contest. Vivian Ventrano arrives to pick up Yoko’s dad’s shirts.*

Many details in this chapter help us get to know the characters better. Discuss. Add Vivian to the Cast of Characters chart. Update Vincent’s profile.

The smiley fish cracker leads Mac to an idea. Discuss.

What questions do you hope the next chapter answers?

## Chapter 12 "Ring...Ring...Ding"

*Vincent comes to the door. Mac has to wait until later to share his idea.*

How is Vincent feeling as he stands at the door facing the Cayuga Island Kids? How do you know?

Why do you think Vincent wrote the apology note?

How do you think Vincent will fix the damaged basket?

What words would you use to describe how Mac is feeling in this chapter? How do you know he is feeling this way?

What do you think Mac's idea might be?

## Chapter 13 "Brains Storming"

*Lacey has a conversation with Mrs. Schieber.*

Why does Lacey notice Mrs. Schieber's water bottle? Recall Mr. Esposito's comment: "When people realize the problems litter can cause, they understand the importance of cleaning up after themselves." Relate this to Lacey's awareness of single-use plastic. How does information and knowledge help us become better citizens, or cause us to rethink or modify our behavior?

Mrs. Schieber offers Lacey advice in this chapter. Discuss.

How does the conversation with Mrs. Schieber help Lacey?

Add Mrs. Schieber to the Cast of Characters chart.

## Chapter 14 "Sorry, Not Sorry, Very Sorry"

*Maya gets an idea for how Vincent might help with the contest.*

Discuss Maya's idea. What do you think Vincent will say?

## Chapter 15 "Blueberries"

*Yoko eats blueberries, thinks about the contest, makes comparisons, and rhymes.*

Have fun discussing Yoko's creative thoughts.

## Chapter 16 "Fishy Idea"

*The Cayuga Island Kids look in a new direction.*

Discuss how the Cayuga Island Kids work together brainstorming ideas.

Sequence the events in the story, from thinking up the idea to have a contest to deciding to organize a community project.

## Chapter 17 "Community Project"

*The Cayuga Island Kids decide to organize a community project. Vincent will help.*

How do the Cayuga Island Kids team up to look in a new direction and come up with a new plan?

Discuss how the Cayuga Island Kids interact with Vincent.

What do you think will happen next?

## Chapter 18 "The Big Fish by the Small Creek"

*The Cayuga Island Park Community Project comes together.*

Review the steps the Cayuga Island Kids take to make the community project happen.

Why is teamwork helpful?

What do the Cayuga Island Kids do that makes their teamwork successful?

Discuss Yoko's slogan.

Study the newsletter.

## Chapter 19 "Back in the Alley"

*On the day of the community project, Lacey walks through the alley on the way to the park.*

Compare Lacey's walk through the alley in this chapter with her walk through the alley in Chapter 2. What is the same? What is different?

Lacey thinks about Yoko's slogan, "*I am just one person, but I can make a difference. You can, too.*" She makes a decision. What do you think Lacey is going to do?

## Chapter 20 "Making a Difference"

*The Big Fish Community Project takes place.*

Discuss the details in this chapter.

What does each of the characters do to help with the Big Fish Community Project?

How do the Cayuga Island Kids feel? How do you know?

Mac is surprised to see Alice at the park. Lacey tells him, "*I invited her to help build the Big Fish. I wasn't sure what she would say. Or what she would do. But I asked her anyway. She said yes right away.*" Discuss Lacey's actions and the result. (See **Writing Prompts** for a related writing activity.)

Were you surprised by the final scene? How do you think Alice feels?

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

Explain how readers can employ context clues in the text and illustrations details to determine the meanings of unknown or challenging words. On page 3, readers can figure out the meaning of the word *observing* from the context. The word *ecosystem* is directly defined on page 9. On page 10, the words *organisms* and *microbes* and the term *nonliving environment* are defined in context, as is *community* and *higher-learning community*. *Nurdle* is defined in context on page 57.

To help increase retention of unknown or challenging words, discuss personal experiences and common connections to the words.

Have students keep a list of unfamiliar words they encounter in the story. Words may include:

observing (pg. 3), organisms, microbes, nonliving environment, community, higher-learning community (pg. 10), frayed (pg. 12) trellis (pg. 20) trowel (pg. 20) cackles (pg. 34) hackles (pg. 35) public waters (pg. 56) nurdle (pg. 57) slogan (pg 58) vintage (pg 75) trampled (pg. 77) amended (pg. 79) stupendous (pg. 82)

Use context clues.

Check definitions in a dictionary.

Consider synonyms for new words.

*Vocabulary 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 on Ideas—to Create Stories

##### Author's Note: Where Did the Idea for *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* Come From?

Explain that the Author's Note at the end of the book is a message from Judy Bradbury, the author of the book. Read it aloud to students.

Share the author's photo of the big fish in Portugal. Find additional images of big fish recycling receptacles online.

Which piece of information the author provides about getting ideas for stories is most interesting to you? What makes you curious to learn more? If you had a chance to interview the author, what question would you ask her?

#### Dedication

Explain the purpose of a book dedication. Read the dedication aloud. Why do you think the author dedicated *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* to her writing group? Talk about the value of feedback and revision in the writing process. Discuss experiences students have had with writing partners or writing critique groups.



## 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. The characters’ personalities, interests and activities, what they say, think, treasure, and even the foods they enjoy, are based on people I know, things I have observed, or conversations I have had or overheard. I created **character sketches**, or notes, on the characters as I began developing the Cayuga Island Kids series, and I added to them throughout the writing of the three books. The illustrator of the series, Gabriella Vagnoli, also 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 books.”*

Readers get to know characters through their actions, words, and thoughts. As you read *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*, encourage students to employ close reading techniques to uncover details of the Cayuga Island Kids’ personalities, interests, favorite activities, treasured items, and even the foods they enjoy. Log details on the Cast of Characters chart (See **Pre-Reading Activities**). After reading the book, review the chart. Discuss the characters. See the list below for additional prompts.

- What does the character look like?
- What is something the character often says?
- What does the character do?
- What item does the character treasure and/or what activity does the character enjoy?
- What do other characters say and/or think about this character?



### **Thinking Deeper**

Ask students to respond to the following questions in writing, in a group discussion, or with reading partners. Remind students to be specific and include details from the story.

- Which Cayuga Island Kid do you like best? Why?
- Which character do you think is the funniest? Most creative? Most serious? Kindest? Why? Offer details from the story.
- Which character is most like you? Explain.
- Which character is least like you? Explain.
- With which character would you most like to be friends? Why? What do you imagine you would enjoy doing together?
- Which adult character do you like best? Why? Explain.
- Compare and contrast two of the characters in the story. How are they alike? How are they different?

### Story Craft:

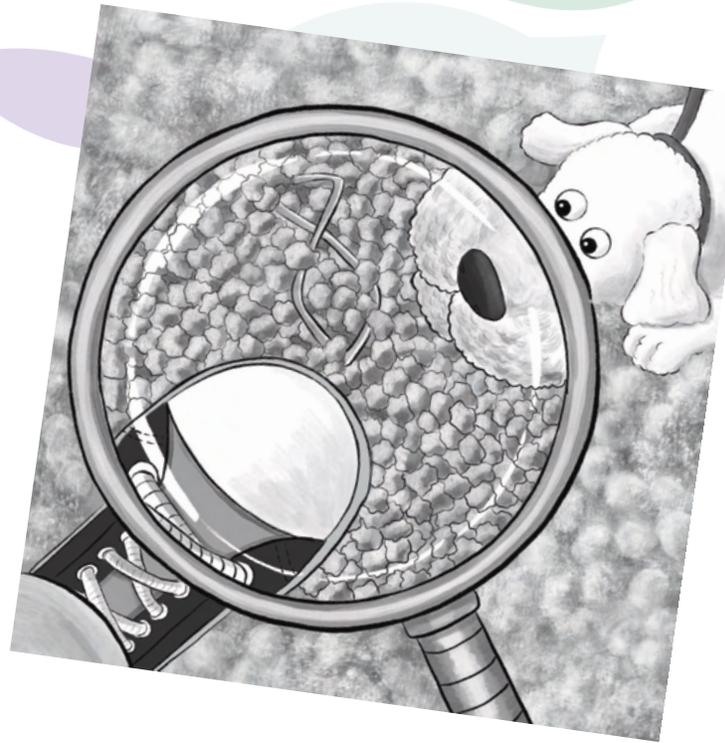
- How do the author and illustrator help the reader get to know the characters?
- What parts of the character’s personalities are best shown in the pictures? Which are best shown with the author’s words?



## Thinking Beyond

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

- How would the character choose to spend a 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? Unhappy?
- What is one thing you could count on this character to do?
- What is something this character most likely would never do?
- What do you imagine might be this character's favorite animal? Snack? Movie? Type of book? Activity, hobby, or sport?
- If this character were going shopping, what might he or she buy with allowance or birthday money?



**Make it a game!** For each question, have students place answers on small squares of paper below the character's name. Place squares in a box or hat. Pull out squares and read the answers. Have students guess which character is being described.

What is one question you would like to ask one of the characters? What do you imagine the character's answer would be?

## Thinking Creatively

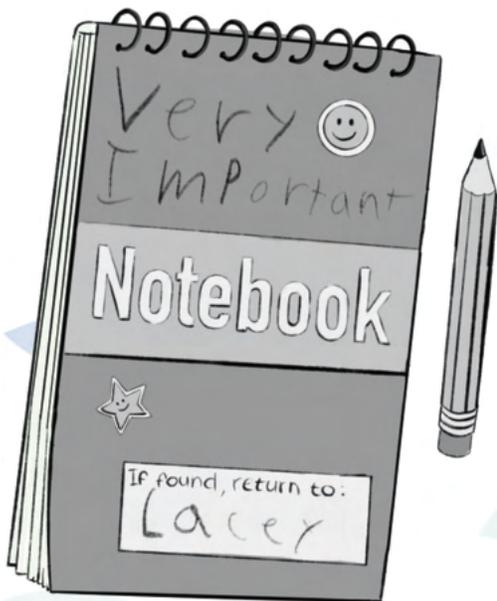
Ask students to create a new character to join the Cayuga Island Kids.

- Develop a **character sketch**. Decide what pieces of information to include.
- Choose one of the following:
  - Write a scene involving the new character.
  - Draw an illustration of the character doing something.

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

See also the Character Sketch Activity available free for download at: <https://cityoflightpublishing.com/app/uploads/2021/02/The-Cayuga-Island-Kids-Book-1-Character-Sketch-Activity-Sheet-converted.pdf>

*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)

**Verde Dry Cleaners** is a green, or environmentally-friendly, local business. **Verde** (VAIR day) means green in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.

## The Setting of the Story:

Read the following to students:

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

*“Cayuga Island, the setting of **The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek**, is real. It is located exactly where it says in the introduction. I’ve modified the island a bit to fit the story, but overall, it is pretty much the way it’s described. I grew up on Cayuga Island. My father built the house I lived in on Griffon Avenue. On the map at the beginning of the book, my house would be located very near Yoko’s house. I think we would have been friends!”*

*An author might alter a real place in some ways to help tell an imaginary or **fictional** story in a clearer way. Since I changed Cayuga Island—even though it’s just a bit—the setting of my series is **BASED** on a real place.”*

See the activities listed under **Maps** for further study of the setting of the Cayuga Island Kids series.

## The Facts: Pollution in Our Water, Recycling, Ecosystems, Mallards, and more!

Like Julian in the story, many students are curious; they enjoy learning facts and take pleasure in reading nonfiction. Other students may benefit from being introduced to compelling age-appropriate informational books.

Several nonfiction topics are touched on in *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*. For example, pollution in our water is a real problem Single-use plastics can be harmful to our environment. The Cayuga Island Kids experience this firsthand.

- Review and list the facts the Cayuga Island Kids gather at the library (Chapter 9).
  - Which fact is most interesting to you?
  - Which facts would you include in a report on water pollution?
- **Learn more!** Just as the Cayuga Island Kids do, students can conduct research in their school or public library and online. Remind students of Mrs. Schieber’s advice: Always check more than one source to make sure facts are accurate. Be certain online sources are safe to visit and reliable

Delve deeper into nonfiction topics introduced in *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*. In addition to water pollution, these include litter, recycling, single-use plastics, nurdles, ecosystems, mallards, sunfish, fishing, green dry cleaning, weed flowers, and community projects. See the list of related books to explore under **Science** later in this guide.





## **The Plot**

View the trailer for *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNqQmCdM8Sw>). Discuss what the creators chose to highlight. Do you think viewing the trailer generates interest in reading the book? Explain. What do you learn about the story from this short clip? Use the trailer to help write a concise summary of the book.

What happens at the beginning of the story, in Chapter 2, after we meet the Cayuga Island Kids?

What activities were the Cayuga Island Kids about to engage in?

What happens that changes what the kids are focused on?

What happens next?

How does that event spur the kids to action?

How do the Cayuga Island Kids work together to solve the problem of litter in the park and creek?

Does everything go smoothly?

How do the Cayuga Island Kids solve their problems planning an event?

What happens at the end of the story?

How do you think the kids' experiences will impact how they approach teamwork, brainstorming, and planning in the future?

## **Point of View**

In *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* readers are able to “get inside the heads” of each of the Cayuga Island Kids. They know their thoughts and feelings. Ask students to write a paragraph from the point of view of one of the minor characters in the story. Help the reader understand their thoughts and feelings. See especially Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12, and 13, 17, and 20.

In Chapter 20 “Making a Difference” Lacey offers Alice her winning raffle ticket. Imagine you are Alice. If there were another chapter in this book, what would you be doing?

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

Choose a character from the story and discuss his or her change in point of view.

## **Sequence of Events**

The Cayuga Island Kids' plans change over the course of the story. There are twists and turns, obstacles, and complications. The characters decide to look in a new direction. Ultimately, they plan and execute a successful community project. Chart their progress by identifying main events. Place them on a time line in the order in which they occur in the story.

## **Reader's Theater**

With this activity, students participate actively in the story by reading orally from a script developed from the text. Research on the use of 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 ensure the most benefit for improving fluency and provide a rewarding literacy experience.

Dialogue is best suited for reader's theater scripts. Several scenes in *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* lend themselves to reader's theater scripts. Suggestions include:

- Chapter 5
- Chapter 10, pp. 62-66
- Chapter 16
- Chapter 17

Students can perform reader's theater in person or via a video conferencing platform. Reader's theater is also an excellent family activity. Invite immediate family members to participate or suggest students connect by means of video platforms with extended family that do not live nearby.

For more information on reader's theater, go to [Reading Rockets](#)

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

## Literature Circles

Literature circles, student-led book groups in which participants engage in conversations about a shared reading experience, offer many benefits. Though a variety of methods exist for conducting literature circles, they share common skill sets: forming, asking, responding to, and reflecting on questions related to text; group discussion centered on various aspects of literature; engaging in respectful and meaningful conversation; setting agendas; and participating in peer-driven, collaborative reading and learning experiences. Begin by introducing the literature circle components and features as they will be conducted in your setting. Form small groups. Guide students in collaborating to create a schedule to read chapters of *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* and meet to discuss aspects of the story.

Set objectives and expectations; model acceptable group discussion behavior. Monitor and assess. Provide feedback and guidance as needed. See the resources listed below for more information on establishing literature circles.

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

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

[Literature Circles Resource Guide](#)

## Reading Journal

If students will be offered *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* as an independent reading choice, consider discussing the story via journaling. Journal discussions, or dialogue journals, motivate developing readers: feedback keeps interest high and bolsters confidence in independent reading skills. Students can engage in journal discussions with their teacher, librarian, reading partners, older students who act as reading mentors, or family members. Journals can be physical paper journals or online files. Entries may be written and/or visual. Endeavor for responses to occur regularly and frequently. Encourage students to share their reading journals at home. Families can be encouraged to journal about their independent reading. Journal discussions can provide a valuable opportunity for young independent readers to connect with extended family members, especially those they may not see or interact with frequently.

Read more about [Dialogue Journals](#).



## Writing Prompts

In Chapter 1 we meet the Cayuga Island Kids. We learn of their interests, their thoughts, their clothing, their homes, and other details. Write a paragraph describing one of your friends or siblings. Use descriptions that appeal to the senses and will help your readers form images of this person in their minds.

Cayuga Island Park is the setting of *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* and a favorite location for the Cayuga Island Kids to gather and spend time together. Where do you like to spend time with your friends? Write a description. Be specific and give details. Illustrate and write a caption.



In Chapter 5 “Bird Brains” Lacey shares a saying her grandmother uses when she is upset: “*Mad as a wet hen.*” In Chapter 7 “A Stack of Facts” Yoko “*zips her lips.*” Sayings such as these are called **idioms**. Learn more about these idioms. What do they mean? Where did the sayings come from? What are similar sayings? Look up other idioms. Write about a favorite one. Books to reference:

- *The Cat’s Pajamas* by Wallace Edwards
- *Heavens to Betsy! & Other Curious Sayings* by Charles Earle Funk, illustrated by Tom Funk
- *In a Pickle And Other Funny Idioms* by Marvin Terban, illustrated by Giulio Maestro
- *Mad As a Wet Hen! And Other Funny Idioms* by Marvin Terban, illustrated by Giulio Maestro
- *Raining Cats & Dogs: A Collection of Irresistible Idioms and Illustrations to Tickle the Funny Bones of Young People* by Will Moses
- *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms* by Marvin Terban

In Chapter 6 “An Idea to Share,” Mr. Esposito tells Lacey and Yoko, “*When people realize the problems litter can cause, they understand the importance of cleaning up after themselves.*” Sometimes we may not realize the consequences of our actions. Tell about a time when you or someone you know changed a habit or behavior after realizing the effects or outcomes of the action.

In Chapter 8 “The Pesky Plan” the Cayuga Island Kids gather to discuss the litter problem in Cayuga Island Park. It’s a big problem, and they aren’t sure they can solve it. Julian says, “*Making a difference can catch on. One person becomes two and two becomes four. Pretty soon one becomes too many to count.*” What does Julian mean? Do you believe this is true? Support your opinion with facts drawn from personal experience.

In Chapter 9 “Nurdles” Lacey imagines being interviewed on the radio or TV about why recycling is important. She considers writing a letter to the editor. Write a letter to the editor about why recycling is important. Be sure to include facts and details. Add personal experiences to help make your point. Be persuasive!

In Chapter 13 “Brains Storming” Mrs. Schieber says, “*Teamwork makes the dream work.*” What does this mean? Do you agree? Use personal experience to support your opinion.

Mrs. Schieber advises Lacey: “*Consider the big picture. Look all ways. Maybe look in a new direction.*” What does Mrs. Schieber mean? Do you think this is good advice? Explain. Tell about a time when you looked in a new direction in order to solve a problem, or a time when it would have been a good idea to look in a new direction.

In Chapter 20 “Making a Difference” Mac is surprised to see Alice at the park. Lacey tells him, “*I invited her to help build the Big Fish. I wasn’t sure what she would say. Or what she would do. But I asked her anyway. She said yes right away.*” How has Lacey’s actions made a difference?

Lacey reaches out to Alice even though she is unsure whether it will turn out the way she hopes. Think about your experiences. Is there someone you can reach out to? Explain.

## Imagery

In the first book in the Cayuga Island Kids series, we learn that Yoko loves to rhyme. In *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* she is inspired by the author of a book she read to think up creative comparisons. Close read to find Yoko's comparisons. Make a list. Which comparison is your favorite? Why? Choose a scene in the book and create a comparison to reflect what is happening or how a character is feeling.

Delve further into similes and metaphors with students. Scaffold learning by selecting from these books to read aloud to students:

- *Crazy like a Fox: A Simile Story* by Loreen Leedy
- *It Figures! Fun Figures of Speech* by Marvin Terban, illustrated by Giulio Maestro
- *Muddy as a Duck Puddle and Other American Similes* by Laurie Lawlor, illustrated by Ethan Long
- *My Best Friend is as Sharp as a Pencil and Other Funny Classroom Portraits* by Hanoch Piven
- *My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks and Other Funny Family Portraits* by Hanoch Piven
- *Quick as a Cricket* by Audrey Wood, illustrated by Don Wood



Ask students to reflect on each character's personality and interests. Create a comparison for each character in the story. *XX is as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_.* Or *XX is like \_\_\_\_\_.*

In addition to making comparisons, Yoko continues to rhyme at times (that's sort of a rhyme right there!) Close read to find Yoko's rhymes.

See also ideas for exploring idioms on page 14.

Additional writing activities are offered throughout other sections in this guide.

## Author/Illustrator Study

Author and illustrator studies broaden students' interest in books and support their growth as readers, writers, and artists. They also strengthen 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 and dynamic: they become real to the reader.

Generate a list of questions students have. Visit author/illustrator websites. Guide students to notice connections in the author/illustrator's various works. Glean an author/illustrator's interests. What do they value? What are they passionate about? Is this reflected in their writing? Learn about the author/illustrator's creative process. How and where do they work? What are their habits or methods? 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.

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

*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

### Science

In Chapter 1 “The Cayuga Island Kids” Maya is thinking about the weed flowers she and Mrs. Schieber researched. Conduct your own research! Learn more about these flowering weeds: dandelions, clover, and shepherd’s purse. Find images. Which type of weeds would you collect if you were Maya? What types of flowering weeds grow where you live? Make a chart. What are common characteristics? How are they different? When do they grow? When do they flower? What conditions do the weeds favor?

In Chapter 1, Julian learns the definition of an ecosystem. He also learns about living organisms and nonliving environments (pp. 9-10). Review what he finds out and what he wonders about. Are you curious about ecosystems and nonliving environments? Find out more.

In Chapter 3 “Six-Ring Problem” a mallard is caught by a plastic ring, or yoke, used to hold together six-packs of cans. Discuss the dangers of such plastic holders to wildlife. Demonstrate how to cut apart these plastic rings before disposing of them so that they are less likely to cause harm if they find their way into waterways. (Cutting them apart won’t completely reduce the risk to wildlife because plastic is harmful if swallowed.) Research to find more information and alternatives to plastic can holders that are used around the world.

In Chapter 6 “A Stack of Facts” Mac and Julian catch sunfish. They observe the fish and then return them to the creek. Re-read the scene (pp. 45-46). Discuss how each of the boys observes different aspects of the sunfish. What would you be interested in observing if you were fishing with Mac and Julian? Find images of sunfish. Discuss how fish need oxygen from water to live. Point out how Mac and Julian hold their breath to get an idea what it feels like for a fish to be out of water. The boys are respectful of the sunfish and their needs. Discuss.

In Chapter 9 “Nurdles” the Cayuga Island Kids gather a number of facts about water pollution and the effects of litter in our water systems. They learn about nurdles and the concern over single-use plastic in our waterways. Share facts with children to raise awareness. Discuss alternatives and actions we can take to keep our waterways clean. Many of the books listed below have excellent back matter. For example, in *Ocean Soup*, readers can find a list of the top four types of plastic that pollute the world’s seas: plastic bags (Americans use one million every minute! Yet just one percent are recycled.), plastic bottles (Americans use three million plastic water bottles every hour.), plastic straws (We use 500 million every day.), and Styrofoam (We use 25 billion Styrofoam coffee cups every year and less than two percent are recycled.)



In Chapter 11 “Snacking on Ideas” readers meet Vivian who works for Verde Dry Cleaners. Yoko tells her friends, “*Verde Dry Cleaners is green. They use safer cleaning solutions. They also reuse hangers and recycle damaged ones.*” Learn about safer alternatives to cleaning solutions. How can you make your home more green? Is there a green dry cleaner in your community? Research to find out!

Listed below is a selection of books of interest related to recycling, water pollution, and single-use plastic:

- *Alba and the Ocean Cleanup* by Lara Hawthorne
- *The Big Beach Cleanup* by Charlotte Offsay, illustrated by Katie Rewse
- *Dear Earth... From Your Friends in Room 5* by Erin Dealey, illustrated by Luisa Uribe
- *Fly Guy Presents: Garbage and Recycling* by Tedd Arnold
- *Kids Fight Plastic* by Martin Dorey, illustrated by Tim Wesson
- *Kids Who Are Saving the Planet* by Laurie Calkhoven, illustrated by Monique Dong (Ready-to-Read You Should Meet series, Level 3)
- *The Last Straw: Kids vs. Plastics* by Susan Hood, illustrated by Christiane Engel
- *Ocean Soup: A Recipe for You, Me, and a Cleaner Sea* by Meeg Pincus, illustrated by Lucy Semple
- *Old Enough to Save the Planet* by Loll Kirby, illustrated by Adelina Lirius
- *Plastic, Ahoy! Investigating the Great Pacific Garbage Patch* by Patricia Newman, photographs by Annie Crawley

- *Plastic, Past, Present, and Future* by Eun-Ju Kim, illustrated by Ji-Won Lee
- *The Plastic Problem: 60 Small Ways to Reduce Waste and Help Save the Planet (Lonely Planet Kids)* by Aubrey Andrus
- *The Problem with Plastic: Know Your Facts, Take Action, Save the Oceans* by Ruth Owen

Informational picture books about rivers:

- *River* by Elisha Cooper
- *They Call Me River* by Maciek Albrecht

Follow up read-alouds by asking students to identify unanswered questions they have about the topic. Provide books, articles, and online resources for students to investigate further. Remind students to check more than one source.

Ask students to:

- Gather five of the most interesting facts.
- Write a mini report.
- Share information in large or small groups and/or via video platforms.

[Additional resources and ideas about what we can do to reduce global plastic waste.](#)

Ask students to walk through the house and look for plastic products. Some examples: pillow stuffing, bed sheets, toys, shampoo bottles, towels, bath toys, toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, soap dish, bath cap, shower curtain, shower head, apron, buckets, milk jugs, plastic bags, cups, condiment bottles and jars, bowls, counter tops, pot handles, cooking utensil handles, chopping boards, refrigerator handles, planters, broom, garden hose, sports balls, slides, elbow pads, bike seats, handlebars, helmets, bike pedals, tires, even the bike path may be made of plastic! Make a list and share as a class the following day. Make a mural for the hallway depicting all the plastic we use. Highlight single-use plastic items and suggest we work to reduce use.

Discuss the 5 Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Rethink, Repair, Refuse, Recycle. Have students report to the class how they accomplish one or more of these positive impacts on our environment.

Learn about mallards, fish, and other life found in creeks, ponds, streams, and rivers.

NGSS: 1-LS1-1; 1-LS1-2; 2-LS4-1; K-2-ETS1-1; K-2ETS1-3; 3-LS4-2; 3-LS4-4; 2-LS-2

## Social Studies

### Research

In Chapter 9 “Nurdles” the Cayuga Island Kids visit the public library to learn more about litter and recycling. As they gather facts, they become more curious and their interests grow. Mac realizes that they are not figuring out how to solve two important reasons for holding the contest in the first place. Discuss how to keep goals or purpose clear when conducting research.

In Chapter 13 “Brains Storming” Mrs. Schieber tells Lacey, “*Splitting up the work on a project makes sense. But working together keeps your brains storming.*” Discuss why this is good advice when working with others on a project.

### Maps

Find Cayuga Island on a map of Western New York.

- Compare the map in *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* with the real map of Cayuga Island.
- What is the same on each map? What is different?



In Chapter 20 “Making a Difference” Lacey arrives at the park and observes what’s going on. Using the details provided at the beginning of the chapter (pp. 119-121), draw a picture of the scene.

Yoko’s slogan for the Big Fish community Project is: *“I am just one person, but I can make a difference. You can, too.”* Have students draw illustrations on a wall mural that exemplify this slogan. Display in the classroom or hallway.

*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.*

## Outside the Classroom

Visit a park in your neighborhood or area.

Plan a community project! One idea: arrange for a clean-up day with classmates, family, or friends to pick up litter around the school or in your neighborhood.

Organize a toy or book swap at your school or in your neighborhood. You can get a “new” toy or book without impacting the environment.

Spread the word about protecting our environment:

- Encourage family and friends
- Whenever possible, refuse plastic
- Write letters to school officials, local leaders, and companies about improving practices
- Start a petition for better practices in your school or community
- Most importantly, lead by example

## Social-Emotional Themes

Acceptance, commitment, community, 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](http://www.judybradbury.com) and [www.cityoflightpublishing.com](http://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/](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/). For more information on the Next Generation State Standards, go to [www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/AllDCI.pdf](http://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/AllDCI.pdf).*

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