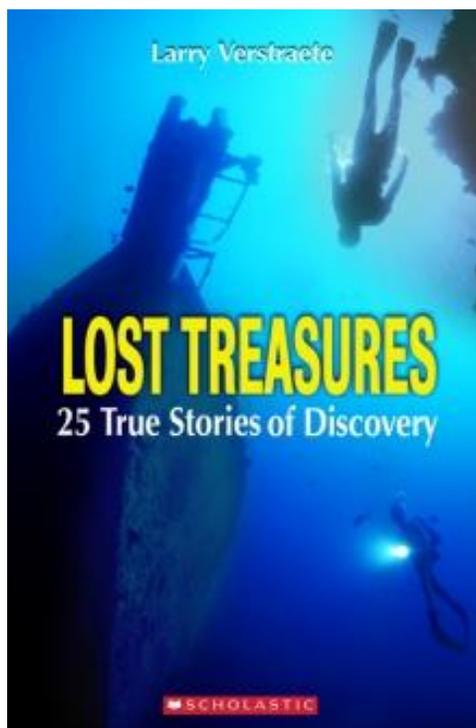


## TEACHER'S GUIDE

### LOST TREASURES: 25 TRUE STORIES OF DISCOVERY

by Larry Verstraete



In *Lost Treasures: True Stories of Discovery*, treasure is defined simply as something rare, valuable or prized. In this book, treasure hunters search for everything from sunken Spanish galleons, pirate chests, and lost tombs to unusual stamps and missing works of art. Dozens of shorter clips expand the theme, providing readers with nuggets of information about other treasures found or still missing.

This guide offers a range of classroom activities that are designed to promote discussion and expand understanding as readers explore the stories in this book.

### ***Family Treasure***

Every family has items that are precious and are considered to be family treasures. Have students conduct some research at home. What is your family's most treasured item? What is the story behind it? After students share their findings, help students develop a definition for 'treasure'.

### ***Treasure Hunt***

Before class, hide one or more objects in the classroom or on the playground, then prepare a map or list of directions (paces, compass directions etc.) that will lead students to the site.

With students, read the story of Hubert Palmer (*Missing Maps*, p.30). Discuss the possibility that Kidd's maps still exist and might be genuine. With that thought in mind, tell students that you have a treasure map yourself. Provide them with copies and let students loose to discover the treasure. As a variation, have students try the reverse i.e. hide objects and prepare maps for each other.

### ***Mystery Object***

Read a treasure story that describes the discovery of mysterious artifacts. *Venus de Milos Revealed* (p.160), and *Brittle Bundles of the Dead Sea* (p. 170) are examples. Invite students to bring their own 'mystery objects' from home. A mystery object is something that cannot easily be identified. It could be something old and no longer in common use, an obscure or seldom-seen item, or perhaps a small piece of some larger object. Display the objects and give students time to examine them. Ask them to guess the names and functions of each item, then later have the owners reveal their identities. Relate this to the challenge facing archaeologists and other treasure hunters who often encounter broken or unidentified artifacts.

### ***Collection Day***

Kids like to collect treasures of their own: comic books, action figures, toy cars, shells, rocks, trading cards etc. Hold a 'Collection Day' (think *Antique Roadshow*) where students are allowed to bring their collection to school to share with the rest of the class.

### ***Treasure Around the World***

As students read stories, chart the locations of treasure on a world map. Use one colour to denote where treasures can be seen today (e.g. Venus de Milos – Paris). Use another colour to chart the probable locations of treasures that are still missing. Use a third colour to indicate treasures whose identity or authenticity remains unconfirmed.

### **What's My Motive**

Treasure hunters often differ in their reasons for wanting treasure. For some, profit or fame is the motive. For others, it is personal satisfaction knowing that they have achieved a long-sought goal. Still others are motivated by the knowledge that the treasure brings. For them, new understanding, not wealth, is the aim.

As students read stories of treasure hunters, have them think of the motives involved. Prepare a classroom chart with columns labeled: Fame, Fortune, Knowledge etc. With each new story, chart the motives of the treasure hunters involved.

### **Good, Bad, Indifferent**

Compare two stories where treasure hunters have widely different intentions, for example Mensun Bound in *Looted Treasure* (p.78) vs Sydney Ford in *Beneath Mildenhall's Soil* (p.130) or Walter Alva in *Lords of Sipan* (p.108) vs Vincenzo de Prisco in *Secrets of Boscoreale* (p.104). Use discussion, role play, debate or another forum to explore the pros and cons of each situation. How do differences in motive lead to different approaches and results? Who gains? Who loses?

### **Looters: A Problem?**

Read *Looted Treasure* (p.78), *Secrets of Boscoreale* (p.104), *Brittle Bundles of the Dead Sea* (p.170), *Lords of Sipan* (p.108) or other stories where looting plays a part in the discovery. Discuss or debate the issue. Have students first think in terms of the present, listing the immediate problems and outcomes. Then have them project ahead five, ten or more years to list the possible problems and outcomes if the issue is left unresolved.

### **Coin a Phrase**

Coins feature prominently in several stories such as *Finding the Lost Fleet* (p.65), *Lost Treasure off Dead Man's Island* (p.22) and *The Catch of a Lifetime* (p.94). Collect as many coins with different dates as possible. Distribute one coin to each student. Use coin to spur on one or more writing activities. Some examples:

- Non-Fiction: Research the year cited on the coin. Find one outstanding event from that year. Share the event with the class either through an appropriate form of representation: writing, illustration, drama etc.
- Fiction: Imagine the coin to be part of a precious treasure. Where are the rest? What has happened to them? How did the coin become separated from the other pieces? How was it discovered? Write a fictional story where the coin is a major character.

## ***My Story***

In some stories, archeologists and treasure hunters rely on artifacts to tell stories about the past. Invite the class to explore the stories behind everyday objects they possess. Have each student bring an object that has a personal story connected to it, and allow time for them to share the story. Objects could be awards, collections, photos, books, toys, gifts, items of clothing etc.

To hone their deductive skills, ask students to bring 5 -10 'artifacts' that belong to an undisclosed person in their household. Pair students, and allow time for them to examine the objects brought by their partner. From the objects, ask students to infer the age, gender, personality characteristics and habits of the owner. What can they tell about the person from the things he/she owns?

## ***I Have A Date***

Read one or more stories where establishing the date or age of an artifact played a key part in identifying a treasure or solving a mystery from the past. Some examples are: *Lost Treasure off Dead Man's Island* (p.22), *Brittle Bundles of the Dead Sea* (p.170). With the stories as inspiration, have students examine objects that are 'dateable'.

Letters, cancelled stamps, coins, milk cartons, newspapers, e-mails, prescription medicines and dozens of other objects, either have dates stamped directly on them or are date-traceable in some way. Collect these items. Invite students to examine them, determine their dates, and rank order them from oldest to most recent.

As a variation, place the objects in a bag, have students draw them out one at a time, and place each newly drawn object on a number line relative to the ages of objects that were drawn prior to it.

## ***Treasure Right Under Their Noses***

In the stories, *I Was Sure it Was Old* (p.53), and *Older than the School Itself* (p.59), treasure is discovered in the most unlikely of places – in school, right under the noses of students themselves. Stir the imaginations of students with a discussion. Is there treasure in their own school or classroom? Some unclaimed or unidentified painting, sculpture, book or other such object right in full view or perhaps hidden in the office, library or gymnasium? How did it get there? What's its story? Use the stories as a springboard to creative writing.

## ***Buried Treasure***

To give students an appreciation of archeologists and their work, conduct a simulated dig on the school playground or at another site. Bury objects in the ground at varying levels. Be strategic. The kinds of objects selected and their depth and placement in the soil compared to one another should tell a story to students who will excavate the site.

Provide students with trowels, toothbrushes, spoons and other digging supplies. After teaching them excavation basics such as proper digging and charting methods, have students excavate the site and interpret the evidence they uncover. How are the items connected? What story do they tell?

## ***Puzzling Pieces***

In stories such as *Brittle Bundles of the Dead Sea* (p.170), the treasure hunter is faced with a confusing puzzle. Only pieces of a whole object are found. Foster an appreciation for the task facing the treasure hunter through the following activities:

- **Missing Piece**

Have students prepare a written or printed message on a full-sized piece of paper. Afterwards instruct them tear up the message into a number of irregularly shaped pieces. Have them randomly remove one of the pieces and set it aside. Put the remaining pieces in an envelope. Exchange envelopes with another student. Try to reassemble and interpret the message with one piece missing. How difficult is the task? What strategies did they use?

- **Reconstruct an Artifact**

Break up a cup, saucer, clay pot or other object. Place all but one or two pieces in a bag. Have students try to reassemble the object using tape or glue to hold the parts together.

- **Coded Message**

Let students try their own hand at making up a coded message. Provide opportunities for them to exchange messages and decipher the code created by another student. What clues were needed? What strategies were used?