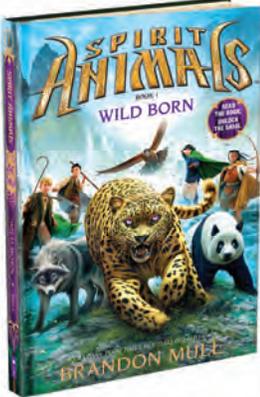


SPIRIT ANIMALS

CCSS
READY!

Text-Based Discussion Guide with Common Core Correlations

Spirit Animals Book 1: *Wild Born* by Brandon Mull



In the world of Erdas, four children are about to discover if they have a spirit animal bond, a rare and powerful link between human and beast. Separated by vast distances, each sees a flash...and then the animals emerge. Wolf, leopard, panda, falcon. Now their fate is set. These four young heroes and their spirit animals must band together to save their world. Readers can join the quest and get their own spirit animal at scholastic.com/spiritanimals.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the Nectar Ceremony signify a coming of age for eleven-year-olds in the kingdom of Erdas? The four main characters have come of age, but they still must grow up. Which character grows the most?
2. Why are Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan surprised when they call their spirit animals?
3. Compare and contrast the families of Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan. They experience different degrees of homesickness. Which character has the toughest time leaving home? Cite passages from the novel that reveal just how much each character misses their family or village.
4. Discuss the role of women in the families of Abeke and Meilin. How do Abeke and Meilin defy the traditional female role? Explain what Shane means when he says to Abeke, "Those of us with heavy burdens find family where we can" (p. 60).
5. Every character experiences fear at some point in the novel. Compare and contrast how they each deal with fear. Which character is the most unprepared to face fear?
6. Discuss the relationship between fear and courage. How do the spirit animals give the characters courage? What do Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan learn about courage when they encounter Arax?
7. What do the four main characters sacrifice when they call their spirit animals? What do they gain? Explain what their families sacrifice when the children are turned over to the Greencloaks.
8. What are Monte's and Barlow's view of the Nectar Ceremony? Explain what Barlow means when he says, "The Greencloaks are too quick to sacrifice too much" (p. 149).
9. There is good and evil in most works of fantasy. Identify the good and evil characters in the novel. Zerif is called, "the Jackal." How does the name symbolize evil?
10. Discuss how long it takes for each of the four main characters to distinguish good from evil. Cite specific passages that reveal when each character recognizes evil.
11. The end of the novel foreshadows a later adventure in the series that involves a character named Gerathon. Do you think this will be a good or evil character?
12. How do you define trust? How is trust essential to the relationships between the four main characters and their spirit animals? Describe the journey of each character as they strive to form a bond with their animal. Which character is the first to earn the trust of their spirit animal? Why must trust occur before the spirit animal becomes dormant?

13. Explain the responsibility that the Greencloaks place on Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan. How does each character respond to such responsibility? Rollan considers leaving the castle. How does Conor help him reconsider his decision?
14. What is the role of Briggan, Uraza, Jhi, and Essix in helping the children accept the responsibility of being a Greencloak? How does the land of Erdas depend on Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan? What happens if they fail to meet expectations?
15. Conor and Meilin are loyal to the Greencloaks and take the vows. Explain why Meilin is more comfortable with the Greencloaks than she is among her own people in Zhong.
16. Discuss why Rollan is reluctant to join the Greencloaks. Debate whether his life as an orphan might have contributed to his lack of trust or loyalty to anyone.
17. Throughout most of the book, Abeke is loyal to the enemies of the Greencloaks. Why? What does she believe about the Greencloaks? What causes her to switch loyalties at the end? What is Rollan's opinion of Abeke when she finally pledges herself to the Greencloaks?
18. Why does Meilin's father think that the Greencloaks have too much power?
19. Explain what Rollan means when he says, "People with authority tended to abuse it" (p. 69). How does this view of power cause him to doubt the motives of the Greencloaks? Explain how the following metaphor relates to power: "Greencloaks' expectations were [Rollan's] chains" (p. 76).
20. Discuss the power of the talismans of the Great Beasts. How is that power the root of the conflict?

USE THIS GUIDE TO TEACH TO THE FOLLOWING COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

- RL. 4-5.1 – Refer to details and examples in a text, or quote accurately from a text, when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL. 4-5.2 – Determine the theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges; summarize the text.
- RL. 4-5.3 – Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story—or compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events—drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions, or how characters interact).

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL. 4-5.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing one's own clearly.
- SL.4-5.3 – Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points; summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.



Photo © Angela Liddle.

Brandon Mull is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Fablehaven* and *Beyonders* series. As a kid, he had a dog, a cat, a horse, some goldfish (won at a school carnival), and briefly a tarantula (captured in his neighborhood). He now lives in Utah with his wife, four kids, and the family dog.

Spirit Animals Book 1: Wild Born
By Brandon Mull
Ages 8 – 12 • 224 pages

Hardcover: 978-0-545-52243-4 • \$12.99
Reinforced Library Binding: 978-0-545-59971-9 • \$16.99
Ebook: 978-0-545-52255-7 • \$12.99
Also available as a Scholastic Audiobook

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