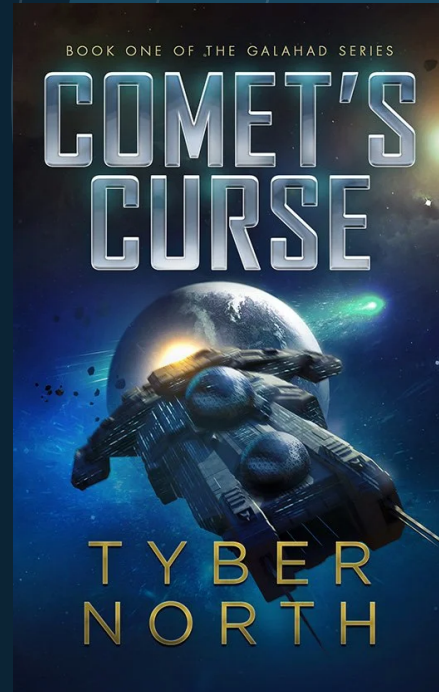


THE GALAHAD SERIES / BOOK ONE

Comet's Curse

STUDY GUIDE

Writing activities,
research projects, and
discussion questions for
teachers and students.



WRITING + RESEARCH

Activities

These projects are designed to deepen comprehension while inviting students to imagine themselves aboard Galahad.

I. LIFEBOAT TO THE STARS

A

Imagine that you've received an invitation to join the Galahad project. In order to be chosen as one of the crew members, you must leave tomorrow and spend nearly two years of training. With friends or classmates, role-play a conversation between you and your family members as you weigh the pros and cons of accepting the invitation.

B

Write three journal entries that describe the Galahad training experience. This might include the specific training exercises, your instructors, and especially your emotions at being selected. Include your assessment of some of the other candidates: Triana, Gap, Lita, Bon, and Channy.

C

What would you bring from home to decorate your room on the ship? Make a list of five to ten items, and explain how they'll remind you of home. Be creative. Then, share your list with friends or classmates to explain your choices.

D

As Galahad begins the journey and pulls away from Earth, use colored pencils, chalk, or other art materials to draw what you see. Along with the image, use six words that describe your feelings.

E

Dr. Zimmer described Galahad as "humanity's lifeboat." Now that you've been selected to the crew, write an essay in three or four paragraphs to describe what that phrase means to you.

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II. A KNIGHTLY SHIP

- A** Using information from the library or online to learn more about the Knights of the Round Table, the Holy Grail, and Sir Galahad. Then, write a short piece to explain why the spacecraft is appropriately named. As an extra activity with friends or classmates, suggest other possible names, supported by historical facts and their meaning. Then vote on your group's favorite name for a ship designed to save humanity.

- B** Are computers and machines capable of human feelings? Do research into artificial intelligence, then create an informative poster that addresses this question.

- C** Roc is the computer brain that runs the ship, but he's also programmed to be a "friend" to the crew. Divide into teams and debate whether or not this is a good idea for the computer's personality. Include arguments you might've heard from Dr. Zimmer, Dr. Bauer, Roy Orzini, and Roy's colleague, Carl Mynet. You can find Mynet's opinion in Chapter 6.

- D** Using what you've learned about the design of Galahad, use PowerPoint or another computer program to create a "Crew Member's Guide to Galahad." It can include not only the layout of the various levels, but the daily work schedules and responsibilities.

III. PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE

- A** Using the library or online information, research another historic pandemic, such as the Great Plague of the Middle Ages or the Influenza Pandemic of the early 20th century. Gather data on the impact of the disease, including the effects on society. Then create a two-columned chart, comparing your research to Bhaktul's Disease in Comet's Curse.

- B** Given what you found in your research and what you've learned about other recent epidemics, is it farfetched to believe that the events described in Comet's Curse could actually happen? Create a list of other science fiction stories that describe grim future possibilities for humankind. Suggested titles might include: The Giver, by Lois Lowry; Feed, by M.T. Anderson; films such as 2001: A Space Odyssey, and Planet of the Apes. You're free to explore graphic novels and other creative works.

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C

Create detailed character guides for the key players of Comet's Curse. For each (human or computer), describe their past, their role/position aboard the ship, and your prediction of what their future holds.

D

Imagine that you're a reporter and you've been granted a five-minute video connection with Galahad after it has launched. You're allowed to interview just one of the teen crew members. Select the one you'd most like to talk with, and prepare a list of questions to fill that time. For extra credit, create an audio or video recording of your interview.

READ + REFLECT

Questions for Discussion

Use these questions for classroom discussion, small-group work, written responses, or independent study.

1

As Galahad launches, Triana is reluctant to look back at Earth. Why is that? Where did Triana grow up, and what qualities do you think make her a good choice for Council leader?

2

What is Wallace Zimmer's motivation to create the Galahad project? Who is the most vocal opponent of his plan? Imagine you're a scientist during this time period; would you be for or against Dr. Zimmer's plan, and why?

3

How are parent-child relationships a key element in Comet's Curse? Describe the specific relationships between the primary characters and their parents, and discuss how those relationships might influence the characters and the story.

4

What secret does Channy know about Gap? More than one character keeps a secret on the ship, usually involving another crew member. What are those secrets, and how do they perhaps affect their actions?

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5

What does Peter Meyer see on the ship's lower level? What are the initial reactions to the Council to his outburst? Describe the other strange events that follow this first encounter.

6

Bon, Gap, Channy, and Lita have their own responsibilities aboard Galahad. Describe those, and include the personality characteristics of each that might make them well-suited for their jobs. If you'd been selected as a crew member, which of these jobs do you believe you'd be best suited for and why?

7

What do you think might be hidden in the sealed Storage Sections? Do you agree with Dr. Zimmer's decision to keep these areas unopened until the crew arrives at Eos? If you were a crew member, would you be able to resist the temptation to stay out?

8

Roc is not shy about sharing his thoughts about the mission and the various crew members. How do his insights throughout the novel affect your reading? How would you describe his relationship with Triana compared to his relationship with Gap? If you were a crew member, how much would you confide in Roc?

9

What are the reactions of the other Council members when Triana reveals the message she received from the stowaway? Would you have been in favor of her meeting the stowaway alone, or would you have insisted that someone go with her?

10

How have the primary characters changed from the beginning of the story to the end? Have some of them become more confident? Have others perhaps grown less confident? After working together to defeat Dr. Bauer's plan, have they grown stronger as a group?

11

Do you think Comet's Curse is primarily a story about preserving the human race, or about the power of relationships? Explain your answer.

12

With such a long way to go, do you believe Galahad will make it to Eos? Why or why not? What do you think are the greatest threats to the mission: something from outside the ship, or something within?
