CHAPTER 4:
KSBN AND THE COMMON BOOK
KSBN AND THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

What is KSBN?
The K-State Book Network (KSBN) is part of K-State’s first year experience program, K-State First. K-State First was established to help first-year students transition to campus by providing them with the elements necessary to create a solid foundation that will help students be successful in college. These elements are mentoring, small interactive classes, community, and a shared academic experience.

KSBN’s goal is to help guide the transition from high school to college by giving students a shared academic experience and social activities centered around a book.

Why read a common book?
K-Staters wear purple, do “The Wabash,” and read books. This year, we invite the K-State community to read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. A committee of over 50 students, staff, and faculty selected this book because they believe the book will provide a great introduction to the academic culture at K-State.

By participating in this common reading you will
• be introduced to thought-provoking ideas
• participate in engaging discussions
• learn persistence
• build community by interacting with others in activities and discussions built around the book and the issues it raises
• use what was learned from the book in other settings, both in the classroom and more broadly in the university community

How to read a book in a scholarly manner/tips for reading critically
No matter what your skill level, everyone comes across a text that is difficult to read, hard to follow, or just not interesting at least once in their college career. Regardless of the reason, these tips can help you get through the text and retain the information so you can be successful on your next test or essay.

Environment
• Do you do better reading in a quiet space or a lot of background noise? Take that into consideration when before you pick up your book.

Read
• Read in manageable sections. Don’t force yourself to plow through the assigned readings all at once if your brain is fighting it.

Take notes & summarize
• Underline or highlight sections that seem important or spark questions. Break the rules and write in the margins of your book, no one will tell. Write a short summary in your own words of the chapter, section, or paragraph you just read. It will make it much easier to review when it comes time to study for the test.

Talk about it
• Make a new friend in class and talk to him or her about what you read or explain the text to your roommate. Remember, if you can’t explain what you read simply, you simply do not understand what you read.
Summary of the book

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a 2003 mystery novel by British writer Mark Haddon. The novel is narrated in the first-person perspective by Christopher John Francis Boone, a 15-year-old boy who describes himself as “a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties” living in Swindon, Wiltshire. He also has a mystery to solve: the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog. Along the way, Christopher’s investigation reveals important truths about his community, his family, and himself.


RESOURCES

**K-State** (click for more information)
- One Stop Shop
- Academic Advising
- Powercat Financial
- K-State Libraries
- Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education
- Career and Employment Services
- Multicultural Student Organizations
- HandsOn K-State
- StrengthsQuest

**Other titles of interest**

Read-a-likes:
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Simon Stephens and Mark Haddon
- *Thinking in Pictures* - Temple Grandin
- *Angels & Demons* - Dan Brown
- *Murder on the Orient Express* - Agatha Christie
- *The Hound of the Baskervilles* - Arthur Conan Doyle
- *Eat, Pray, Love* - Elizabeth Gilbert
- *The Call of the Wild* - Jack London
- *The Little Paris Bookshop* - Nina George

Watch-a-likes:
- *Temple Grandin*
- *The Body in the Library*
- *Angels & Demons*
- *Call of the Wild*
- *Cube*
- *Eat, Pray, Love*
- *Forrest Gump*

**Videos** (click for more information)
- Official Trailer for The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time Play
- TED Talk: Got a wicked problem? First, tell me how you make toast
- TED Talk: Do schools kill creativity?
Facts, Statistics, and Terms to Know

British Education System
- AS and A levels – exams that help determine what university students will get into
- Primary School - ages 4-11
- Secondary School - age 11-16

Sources:

England vs Great Britain vs United Kingdom
- England is a country that shares borders with Wales, Scotland, and the Atlantic Ocean. Great Britain is an island that includes the countries of England, Scotland, and Wales.
- The United Kingdom is a country made up of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- See also The Difference between the United Kingdom, Great Britain and England Explained by CGP Grey

Sources:

Slang Terms to Know
- Telly - Television or TV
- Cashpoint machine - Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)
- Cashpoint card-Debit card
- Quid - Buck (money)
- Give a ring - Call someone
- Bobby - Cop or police officer
- Tube - London Underground (public transportation)

Sources:
- CIA World Factbook
Compare and Contrast

City | Population | Year
--- | --- | ---
Swindon, England | 209,156 | 2011
London, England | 8,538,700 | 2014
Wichita, KS | 382,368 | 2010
Kansas City, KS | 145,786 | 2010
Manhattan, KS | 52,281 | 2010

Meet the Major Characters

Christopher John Francis Boone
Christopher is a fifteen-year-old boy who lives in Swindon, England with his father, Ed. He is different, but that does not stop him from solving advanced math problems and figuring out some of the world’s greatest mysteries. Christopher uses scientific reasoning to explain why things exist as they do. A Sherlock Holmes fan, Christopher uses Arthur Conan Doyle’s stories as inspiration into discovering the answer to The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. Through this discovery, Christopher breaks his comfort zone, and sets off alone on a journey that changes his life.

Ed Boone
Ed, Christopher’s father, owns a heating maintenance and boiler repair business in Swindon, England. The two trust each other, that is, until Ed tells a white lie he is unable to hide from Christopher.

Judy Boone
Judy, Christopher’s mother, lives in London, England. Initially believed to have died from an unexpected heart attack, Christopher sets out on the journey of a lifetime to reunite with her.

Siobhan
Siobhan is Christopher’s teacher at school. She is the only character who truly understands him. Siobhan helps Christopher write his book as a murder mystery novel, and encourages him to expand his horizons socially and academically.

Sources:
- American FactFinder
- Office for National Statistics

Four rules to live by

1. Drink the chocolate milk in the Derb
2. GO TO CLASS
3. Learn how to navigate the library and don’t be afraid to ask librarians questions
4. Always check your email!

Meredith Clark, K-State First Student Advisory Council Member
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

By Themes:
Problem-Solving
1. Christopher experiences the world quantitatively and logically. His teacher, Mr. Jeavons, tells him that he likes math because it’s safe. But Christopher’s explanation of the Monty Hall problem gives the reader more insight into why he likes math. How is math safe? How does Mr. Jeavons underestimate the complexity of Christopher’s mind and his responses to intellectual stimulation?

2. Christopher uses logical methods to control and organize his life. How does this concept assist in understanding Christopher’s personality? How do you identify with the idea of using order and organization to control life’s uncertainties?

Family
3. What caused the breakup of the Boone family? Is there anything that could have been done to make it easier for the family to cope?
4. How do you define family? Who is part of Christopher’s family?
5. What are all the ways Christopher gives and receives love from his family?

Geographic Information Systems
6. If this book took place today rather than 2003, how would Christopher have approached finding his mother’s home differently?
7. In the age of smartphones, what is the value of learning to read a map?

Animal Companionship
8. What can we learn from Christopher’s affection for animals? Why is he able to connect with them more easily than he can with human beings?
9. How do animals make us human?

Education
10. How is the education system portrayed in the book different from the system you grew up with? What are some important differences between those systems? How do those differences contribute to the success or failure of students?
11. What is an A-level math test? Why was it important for Christopher to be successful at that test?

Creativity
12. How does logic differ from creativity?
13. How does Christopher use creativity instead of logic when solving the mystery of the missing dog?