

Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship

by

Sally Partridge

Published by Human & Rousseau, 2023



A study guide for Grade 7 to 9 (first additional language)

This guide is free for use in the classroom.

Compiled by Carolyn Morton

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Section 1: Introduction

Note: Throughout this study guide, you will find underlined words. These words have been defined in the study guide glossary. There is also a glossary for each chapter of *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship*.

The genre: Characteristics of contemporary realistic fiction/adventure stories

The word **genre** refers to what type of story a book is. *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship* is **contemporary realistic fiction**: This type of story “creates imaginary characters and situations that depict our world and society” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008, p. 7). In other words, contemporary realistic fiction tells a story that takes place in the present time in a world that is familiar to us as readers. For example, Leo is an ordinary thirteen-year-old boy from a familiar setting, Bothasig in Cape Town. Readers will identify with him because, like many teenagers, he loves gaming but struggles with his self-worth.

Another aspect of contemporary realistic fiction is that it focuses on “themes of growing up and confronting personal . . . problems” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008, p. 7). For instance, at the start of the story, Leo thinks he is a nobody and gradually learns to value himself through his experiences. In addition, he has to face personal challenges, such as coping with the pressure of taking part in the championship.

Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship is also an **adventure story**. According to Malatesta (2018), adventure stories are about the main character going on an “epic journey, either personally or geographically” (para. 1). For Leo, the adventure starts when a professional gaming team invite him to play with them in the Esports World Championship in France. This results in his own “epic journey” - an exciting trip to Paris for Leo, his sister Lauren, and best friend Fiks. The journey is not only a geographical one (going to Paris) but a journey of personal growth too as Leo learns more about himself during the championship.

In an adventure story, the main character often “has a mission and faces many obstacles” (Malatesta, 2018, para. 1). Leo’s mission is to help his team win the championship, and he faces many difficulties along the way, such as having to play characters in the championship who are less familiar to him and dealing with bullying.

Short biography: Sally Partridge



Sally Partridge is a well-known South African author with a list of writing accolades to her name, such as the Percy Fitzpatrick Prize and the South African Literary Award for Youth Literature while her novel *Mine* received a South African Literary Award (SALA) in 2019.

She has won the M.E.R Prize for Youth Fiction four times and been shortlisted for the Sanlam Prize for Youth Literature, the Commonwealth Short Story Prize as well as the IBBY Honour List. In 2011, she was included by the *Mail & Guardian* in their list of 200 Young South Africans.

Partridge’s writing is very popular with schoolchildren in South Africa, who have enjoyed her short stories on a range of different subjects, including mermaids and vampires. The popularity of her work is evident in the adaptation of her award-winning first novel, *The Goblet Club*, into a school play entitled *Gif*. Partridge has done a great deal to promote literacy amongst young people – in addition to her writing, she also often gives writing workshops to encourage new writers (SA Literary Awards, n.d.). She is the author of seven books for young adults.

The three stages of reading

Pre-reading

The first stage of reading is **pre-reading**, which means you are doing preparation before starting your reading. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011), pre-reading involves searching for clues about what you expect to see in the text by looking at “accompanying pictures or photographs, the text type, layout, title page, table of contents, chapters, glossary, index, appendix, [and] footnotes” (p. 26). You will do similar pre-reading activities in this study guide.

Other techniques involve “skimming and scanning” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 26) the writing you are going to read to look for important information, such as headings, subheadings, key points and supporting points and using this information to predict what you think might happen.

Reading

This is the actual reading part, where you read the story. The Department of Basic Education (2011) explains what this step involves in the paraphrased list below:

- Working out the meaning of new words
- Reading an extract more than once when necessary to understand it
- Imagining a scene visually
- Analysing the meaning of the text and conclusions that the writer reaches by looking at clues such as the context and word usage
- Asking questions
- Jotting down notes and summing up key points and supporting ideas.

Post-reading

There are different methods that you can use to reflect back on what you have read and what you have learnt from your reading. The list below paraphrases suggestions from the Department of Basic Education (2011):

- Answering questions about the writing
- Drawing conclusions about what you read. Do you agree with the actions of the characters, for instance?
- Analysing a variety of interpretations of the writing. What do different people think about the text and its meaning? Do you agree or not, and why?
- Looking at similarities and differences – for instance, between characters, actions or situations
- Summarising important points from an extract
- Writing your own story
- Analysing the language of an extract – does it contain facts or opinions or both? Has manipulative language (e.g., stereotyping) been used? What are the denotations (the actual meaning) and connotations (suggested or implied meaning) of words in the text? What is the social/political/cultural context of the writing? How does the use of language show which characters have more power than others?

In this study guide, there are post-reading questions to help you reflect back on your reading.

Pre-reading activities

Before starting to read the actual story, it is helpful to have a look at the outside of the book: The **title**, the **front cover**, the **spine** and the **back cover** can help us understand the story. The **copyright page** tells us more about the making of the book and who owns its content: who printed it, who holds the copyright to it and so on.

Let’s start by looking at the **title**, *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship*.

Pre-reading questions on the title

1. What information does the title reveal about the main character?
2. Which words in the title stand out and why?

3. What genre of book would you guess this to be from the title?

Suggested answers

1. The main character is called Leo Jantjies. As "Jantjies" is a surname commonly found in this country, we can deduce that the story is about a South African boy called Leo.
2. The whole title stands out because it is in a prominent (important/noticeable) position, at the top of the front cover, and bright yellow. However, the name "Leo Jantjies" and the word "Esports" are in a larger font than the rest of the title, which makes them more noticeable and suggests that these words are the most important. Leo Jantjies seems to be the main character, and his story will involve esports.

According to the Harvard International Review (2020) "esports are video games that are played in a highly organized competitive environment" (para. 4). These competitions can be between individual players or between teams.

3. Because the title refers to esports, we know the story will be about gaming. The story could be a fantasy, in which Leo dreams about taking part in a world championship, or it could be realistic fiction, in which Leo actually takes part in an international competition. We will discover, from the book, that this novel is in fact **realistic** fiction – Leo goes to Paris to take part in the Esports World Championship.

Next, have a look at the front cover and spine of the book below.



Pre-reading questions

1. Which person on the front cover depicts the main character? Describe him, and give reasons for your answer.
2. Discuss what the positioning of the other two characters says about their importance. Who do you think they are?
3. Comment on the use of colour on the front page.
4. How does the background of the front cover complement the title?
5. Who is the author of this book?
6. Who is the illustrator?
7. What information is included on the spine and why?
8. What are adjectives (describing words) that you would use to describe this book, based on the cover? Give reasons for your answers.

Suggested answers

1. The picture of the boy is in the middle of the cover and he is the biggest figure, so he looks like the most important character. The fact that the words "Leo Jantjies" are also bigger than some of the other words in the title suggests that the boy in the picture is Leo.

What is he like?

Student's own answer. For instance, Leo looks like a teenager based on the picture. He has earphones on, which suggests he likes music or, based on the title, gaming. The picture of a keyboard under the names of the author and illustrator supports the argument that Leo is a gamer.

2. The other two characters are placed lower down and are smaller, which suggests that they are less important.

They look like characters from the past, and they look like warriors. For instance, one man has a skull around his neck and a bare chest, and the other man has something in a backpack which might be weapons – this could mean that they are characters in the video games that Leo plays.

3. Bright yellow is used for the title and the boy's jacket. Yellow is a very noticeable colour, so it is probably used to draw the reader's attention to the most important details: the title and the main character. The fact that both the title and the boy's jacket contain yellow also suggests that there is a connection between the boy and the title, i.e., that the boy in the picture is probably Leo Jantjies. The use of blues and greens elsewhere on the cover, which are less noticeable, help to emphasise the most important information.
4. The background contains the shadows/silhouettes of a crowd of people. Above the people, there are bright lights. Both the crowds and lighting suggest a big event, such as a world championship, in this case, the esports competition.

5. The author is Sally Partridge.

6. The illustrator is Johann Strauss.

7. The spine repeats the title of the book and the author. There are two reasons for this repetition of the front cover. One reason is to emphasise this important information so that readers don't forget the name of the book or who wrote it. This helps to market the book. Another reason why this information is repeated is that books are usually stacked in rows on shelves, and the only part of the book that can be seen is the spine, so the spine needs to contain the most important information about the book.

The spine also has the name of the publisher, Human & Rousseau, so that readers know who was responsible for the publication of the book.

8. Student's own answer. For instance, the bright colours, the dramatic warriors, and the excited grin on Leo's face all suggest that this book could be **exciting, dramatic, adventurous** and **eventful**.

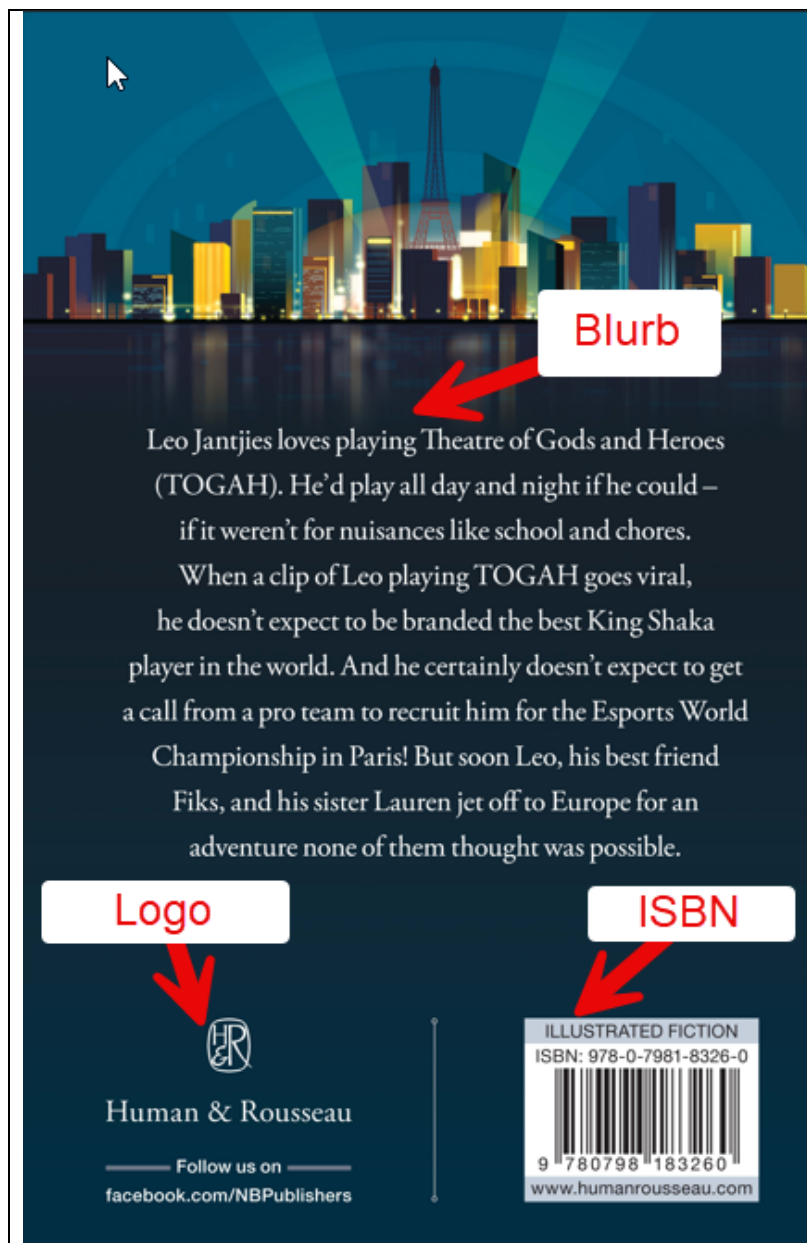
The **back cover's** main aim is to get people to read the book. It needs to grab the reader's attention and make him or her realise that this is a book well worth reading!

The back cover has several different parts to it:

There is a short summary of what the story is about called the **blurb**. Although this tells the reader the main idea of what the story is about, it doesn't give away too much information; otherwise, the reader wouldn't need to read the book to find out what happens.

At the bottom of the back cover, on the left-hand side, the name of the **publisher** is given, as well as their **logo** and their **Facebook page**.

The **ISBN number** is given at the bottom, on the right-hand side, along with the **website** of the book's publisher.



Pre-reading questions


1. What is TOGAH?
2. How does Leo feel about TOGAH? Quote to support your answer.
3. How does Leo become known for his TOGAH skills?
4. According to the blurb, who are the main characters in this story?
5. Have a look at the picture in the background after reading through the blurb. What do you think the picture is of? Why do you think the picture was included?
6. Why has the name of the publisher been given? Why would the publisher's logo, Facebook page and website address be included?
7. What is the ISBN number?
8. What is the function of the ISBN number?

Suggested answers

1. TOGAH is an online game, Theatre of Gods and Heroes.
2. Leo is passionate about the game. We know this because according to the blurb, he would "play all day and night if he could".
3. A video that shows Leo playing TOGAH goes viral.
4. The three characters mentioned in the blurb are Leo, his sister Lauren and Leo's best friend, Fiks.
5. According to the blurb, the esports championship takes place in Paris, so the picture is presumably of Paris. The function of the picture is to include a visual reminder of the setting of the story. The picture will help to attract new readers and will encourage those who are already reading the book to remember what it is about.
6. Giving the name and logo of the publisher and their Facebook page and website address is a way to encourage readers to buy more books published by Human & Rousseau.

7. The ISBN number is 978-0-7981-8326-0.
8. This is a number given to each published book to identify it – a little bit like an ID number. As explained by the Publishers’ Association of South Africa (PASA) (n.d.), “The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique identification number which indicates one publication or edition of a publication, produced by a specific publisher, in one format” (ISBN Numbers section).

The **copyright page** you will find on the last page of the book. You will see this sign on the last page: © This is the copyright symbol. It means the information in the book is the property of the writer, Sally Partridge. There is also a copyright sign next to the illustrator’s name.

<p>Copyright © 2023 in text by S.A. Partridge Copyright © 2023 in illustrations by Johann Strauss First edition in 2023 by Human & Rousseau, an imprint of NB Publishers, a division of Media24 Boeke (Pty) Ltd, 40 Heerengracht, Cape Town Cover artwork by Johann Strauss Cover design by Johann Strauss and Teresa Williams Book designed and set in 12¼ on 16½ pt Adobe Garamond Pro by Teresa Williams ISBN: 978-0-7981-8326-0</p> <p>All rights reserved</p> <p>No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.</p> <p>Printed by  novus print, a Novus Holdings company</p>	<p>Pre-reading questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was the book published and by whom? 2. Under which media company does NB Publishers fall? 3. What does (Pty) Ltd mean? 4. What is the function of the © symbol in the first and second lines? 5. Who designed the cover? Who did the art on the cover? 6. What does “all rights reserved” mean? 7. Who printed the book for Human & Rousseau?
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Suggested answers

1. The book was published in 2023 by Human & Rousseau, which is part of NB Publishers.
2. Media24 Boeke (Pty) Ltd.
3. Pty Ltd means “Proprietary Limited”. According to Intergate Immigration (n.d.), this term means that Media24 is a private company.
4. This is a copyright sign, ©. This sign is used with both the author, Sally Partridge, and the illustrator, Johann Strauss. These copyright signs indicate that the text (the story) and the illustrations may not be copied or distributed by other people as the text belongs to the author and the pictures belong to the illustrator.
5. The cover design was by Johann Strauss and Teresa Williams. The art on the cover was done by the illustrator, Johann Strauss.
6. These words mean that no part of the book can be copied in any way without the permission of the publisher.
7. Novus Print.

Plot

The plot is the different events that happen in the book that together create the story. The different elements of the plot are the **background** (exposition), **rising action**, **conflict**, **climax**, and **falling action/anticlimax**.

Background: We learn that thirteen-year-old Leo loves playing the game TOGAH and is a good player. He lives with his parents and sister in Bothasig in Cape Town, and his best friend is Fiks. After he defeats the god Anubis during a TOGAH game, he is asked to do an interview with *TOGAH Insider News (T.I.N.)* and suddenly becomes well known as a master player of TOGAH, particularly because of how well he plays the character of King Shaka.

Rising action

The rising action is the build-up towards the most exciting part of the story. Leo is invited to join the Ukrainian team, Team Odessa, and take part in the Esports World Championship in Paris. Then, the tension increases with the training for the championship and the different matches that are played.

Conflict: Conflict means arguing/disagreements between people (external conflict) or tension within people (internal conflict). Conflict is a key part of any book as it keeps the reader wanting to read further to find out if, and how, the conflict is resolved.

There is **external conflict** in the book. For instance, there is conflict between Leo and his mother because she doesn't value his passion for TOGAH. There is some tension between Leo and Team Odessa at first, and initially, he doesn't feel very welcome. At times, Leo experiences some conflict regarding Fiks's behaviour – for instance, when Fiks has caps made with "Shaka" on them. Leo also feels uncomfortable when Fiks records him for a TikTok video.

There is external conflict between the competing teams as well, particularly Team Odessa and Team Galaxy, the Australian team. Team Galaxy try to upset Team Odessa by sabotaging their strategy, and one of Galaxy players, Paul, bullies Leo and posts false news about him.

There is also **internal conflict**, which reveals characters' personal struggles. For example, Leo questions his own ability, wondering if he has just been successful because he is lucky. He feels that he is a nobody and struggles to believe in himself, especially when he feels his parents don't value his love of TOGAH. Moreover, he struggles to cope with the fact that he has become well known for his skill in playing King Shaka as it creates a lot of pressure, making him scared that he will fail. Coping with situations that are different from what he expected causes internal conflict in Leo too; for example, he is upset when Team Galaxy deliberately choose King Shaka as one of their characters in order to cause trouble.

Climax: The climax is the most exciting/dramatic part of the story. The climax of this story is the finals of the competition and the moment when the winners are announced.

Falling action: This refers to the part of the book where the author ties up the story. In this book, the falling action happens as Leo gets ready to go home after the competition. He is paid his fee by the coach, Maxim, who also invites Leo to join Team Odessa permanently. There is a happy ending for Leo's sister, Lauren, as well; she asks Maxim to be her boyfriend – he accepts and plans to visit her in Cape Town soon.

Characters

The characters are the people in the story. The important characters are the main characters. There are also minor characters, who play a less important part in the story.

Main characters

Leo Jantjies

Leo is thirteen years old and an excellent TOGAH player, but he doesn't have confidence in his ability. He is quiet and reserved and doesn't easily share what is happening in his life. The person he speaks to most is his best friend, Fiks.

Fiks

Leo's best friend is much more outgoing than Leo. He is happy to break rules – for instance, he doesn't mind being late for school. Talkative and excitable, he is a loyal friend and supportive of Leo. In Paris, he is Leo's manager and helps Leo to stay focused and calm.

Lauren Jantjies

Leo's sister is sixteen years old and addicted to her phone. She can be very selfish and self-absorbed, and her family see her as a diva. However, she can also be kind and show concern for Leo at times. She and Maxim, Team Odessa's coach, are in love, and her relationship seems to make her a nicer, less self-absorbed person.

Maxim Lukanyenko

The team coach is seventeen years old. He is highly stressed but also resourceful, hard-working and committed to teamwork and finding the best possible gaming strategy.

Paul Turner

This character only comes into the story quite late but has a big impact on Leo. A member of Team Galaxy, he is very popular. However, he is also dishonest and a bully. For instance, he makes a video that incorrectly portrays Leo as a cowardly player. Paul's team make a point of trying to upset Leo by selecting Shaka as their character.

Minor characters – these are the less important characters in the story.

Leo's father

He is intelligent and reflective. He is proud of Leo but quite stuck in his ways. For example, he has a fixed routine that he doesn't like to change, even when talking to Leo on the phone while Leo is in Paris. He doesn't quite seem to understand how important TOGAH is to Leo.

Leo's mother

Leo's mother gets annoyed when Leo plays TOGAH too much. She doesn't think playing games is an important pastime and refers to TOGAH as "stupid" (p. 42). She tries to be supportive when she and her husband phone Leo in Paris, but they clearly aren't that keen on gaming.

Angel

She is the blonde-haired captain of Team Traum, an aggressive all-girl team from Germany. A very famous player, she is also the girlfriend of Oleh from Team Odessa.

Members of Team Odessa

Vlad

The Odessa team captain has a shaved head and thick eyebrows and seldom smiles.

Sasha

Very energetic, he has short, red, spiky hair and blue eyes.

Oleh

Oleh is sixteen years old, with pale skin and long black hair.

Svitlana

She wants to prove she is better than Angel, from Team Traum. Her hair is purple and streaked with blue. She enjoys the popularity of being a celebrity.

Narrator

The narrator is the person telling the story. The narrator in *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship* is a **third-person narrator**. This means that the narrator is not part of the events in the book.

The narrator is also **subjective**, which means that they share the “thoughts, feelings, or opinions of one or more characters” (Literautas, 2014, The Different Types of Narrators section), in this case, mainly Leo. Have a look at the example below:

Fiks shook his head, but Leo could tell by the way his best friend was tightly pressing his lips together that he was lying. (p. 115)

Here, we can see that the **third-person narrator** is used, because the story of Leo and Fiks is being told by someone who isn't part of the story.

We can also see that the narrator is **subjective** because they are sharing Leo's thoughts, opinions and feelings. In the extract above, the narrator shares with the reader that Leo *observes* how Fiks is acting and *knows* that he is lying. In other words, the narrator is able to see inside Leo's thoughts and share them with us.

Themes

The theme is the message behind a story. There are several main themes in this book. Some of them are personal – they are related to individuals' everyday lives – and some are more general themes.

Personal themes:

1. **Coping with situations** that are **different** from our **expectations**. For instance, Leo expects to play the character King Shaka in the final and then discovers that he won't after all.
2. The importance of **believing in ourselves/valuing ourselves**. Leo learns about his self-worth through his participation in the championship in Paris.
3. The value of **teamwork**. Leo discovers that people working together as a team and helping each other can make a huge difference in achieving success.
4. Dealing with **bullying**.
5. Dealing with **stress and pressure**.

Broader themes:

1. **Esports** can be a **career**. The author, Sally Partridge (2023), said the following: “I wanted to write a book to show children, and even parents, that esports is a viable and exciting career path. It's not a waste of time. It's a discipline that takes skill and focus, and if you're good, the world is literally open to you” (para. 4).
2. We as South Africans have **reason to be proud of our heroes**. Partridge based the heroes in the game on real-life heroes; these characters include South African heroes. She explained why she did this: “I want readers to feel a sense of pride for our heroes. In a way, it's my way of honouring them” (Partridge, 2023, para. 7).

Section 2: Chapters - pre-reading, summaries, glossaries, questions and post-reading

Chapter 1

Pre-reading

Have a look at the dedication page.

1. There are two dedications on this page: One by S.P. and one by J.S. Have a look at the front cover again – who do you think S.P. and J.S. are?
2. What is the similarity in these two dedications? What does this similarity suggest about the topic of the book you are going to read?

Summary

Leo Jantjies has been gaming for hours, playing the character King Shaka, a Zulu warrior. Leo is playing TOGAH, an online game where the aim is to defeat the gods and the monsters and minions (followers) that help the gods. Many of the other TOGAH players are in Eastern Europe. Leo manages to get past the monsters and minions and faces the god Anubis, with a body of a man and the head of a dog. Leo defeats him, and Leo's character, King Shaka, grows in experience and strength points.

Leo hears shouting from inside his house and stops playing. He hurries to do the chores that he didn't do earlier because he was gaming. His sister Lauren says that he looks very messy and is smelly. Leo thinks it is Saturday, but it is Sunday – without realising, he has been gaming all night. His dogs, Biscuit and Daisy, are very excited to see him. He fills up their bowls. Leo's mother is annoyed because he forgot to eat his supper the night before.

Glossary

Band together – work together in teams

Blast – angry criticism

Blur – if something is a blur, it is moving so fast that it is unclear

Chores – jobs/tasks

Clan – a group that works together

Enchanted – magical

In the wake of – following/after

Javelin – a long spear used in fighting/battle

Levelling – Levelling mean building up a character's experience and strength as each new level of the game is reached

Merged – joined to

Minion – a follower. According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), "if you refer to someone's minions, you are referring to people who have to do what that person tells them to do, especially unimportant or boring tasks"

Nimbly – quickly and confidently

Overthrow – defeat

Scalp – this is the skin on your head to which your hair is attached

Scanning – looking quickly at something for a specific purpose – that is, to try to find something specific

Spawned – if a minion or monster spawns, it is created/emerges on the screen

Surged – grew/increased

Terriers - a type of dog

Wield – use (a weapon)

Questions

1. Who is the protagonist (main character) in this story?
2. Read page 1. Describe what Leo is doing at the start of the book.
3. What does TOGAH stand for?
4. In your own words, describe the aim of the game.
5. How effective is Leo's strategy against the Egyptian god Anubis?
6. How are the reactions of Leo's mother and sister similar when they see Leo?

7. What does the interchange below between Leo and his sister show us about Leo's love of gaming?

Leo was knocked backwards as his sister, Lauren, passed him on the back stairs. He ran a hand through his messy hair and frowned.

"No. It's Saturday."

She rolled her eyes. "It's Sunday. I had to feed the dogs yesterday. It's like living with a troll. A smelly one. Go take a shower."

He ignored her and hauled the bin bag to the black municipal bin. He must have played all night again without realising it. (pp. 3-4)

Chapter 2

Pre-reading

Skim through the first paragraph of Chapter 2.

1. Discuss the setting of the story.
2. Who do you think will be important characters in this story based on the first paragraph?
3. What indication is there that gaming is a key aspect of this story, based on the first paragraph?

Summary

Leo lives in Bothasig in Cape Town. His best friend is Fikisile (Fiks), who lives at the end of Leo's road, and their school is downhill from Fiks's house. Fiks is waiting for Leo to walk to school with him. He is very excited at how well Leo did the previous night in the TOGAH game. Leo says that he got a message from a gaming website called *T.I.N.* because a journalist wants to interview him. Fiks is thrilled; he says *T.I.N.* stands for *TOGAH Insider News*, which is an international gaming website, and he makes Leo reply to them before going to school. It takes Leo a long time to reply because he has a lot to say about his gaming strategy. He gives his family's email address and his home contact number because he is not allowed a phone until he is fourteen.

Info page: Information is given on one of the characters, King Shaka, an ancient Zulu king and warrior.

Glossary

Armour upgrades – better armour

Epic – amazing

Fidgeting – fiddling

Figurine – little statue

Pixelated – a pixelated character refers to a character that is a bit blurry because the individual pixels making up the character are visible

Rallying cry – a yell to others to encourage them/make them feel brave so that they will fight

Strategist – someone who is good at planning his or her next move, especially in a war, in order to defeat the enemy

Suffocating – preventing someone from breathing

Vulnerable – able to be attacked/hurt

Warrior – fighter

Questions

1. Describe Fiks's character based on his appearance and actions in this chapter.
2. Quote a simile from page 6 that shows his resistance to authority/rules.
3. When Fiks says that he thinks Leo could defeat a god on his own, Leo responds as follows:

Leo shrugged. "I guess, but it's a team game. You're not really supposed to go off on your own."
(p. 6)

What does this suggest about the value of working together?

4. What do we call shortened words like *T.I.N.*? Find another example of a word like this on page 8.
5. Explain in your own words why Fiks is so excited on page 7.
6. What is another example from page 7 that shows that Leo's skills are being recognised?
7. Give your opinion on why it takes Leo so long to reply to the journalist's message when he goes to Fiks's house.
8. How has Fiks shown an interest in Leo's gaming skills? Give two examples. What does this show us about Fiks's relationship with Leo?
9. Read the info page on King Shaka. Why do you think that he is the first hero to be discussed in the book?
10. Have a look at the picture of Shaka. What can you deduce about his character from the drawing?

Chapter 3

Pre-reading

Have a look again at the info page on King Shaka at the end of the previous chapter. Consider why it may have been positioned directly before Chapter 3. What might be the focus of Chapter 3?

Summary

Leo and Fiks have forgotten about Leo's *T.I.N.* interview when their geography teacher, Mr Willis, calls them to show them the *T.I.N.* interview and tells Leo he is famous. The interview says that Leo has mastered the character of King Shaka, thanks to his quick reflexes and focus, and shown that the warrior can be one of the strongest characters in the game. In the interview, Leo's strategy is revealed: He gets into the character's head and makes sure he understands how the character moves and behaves during combat.

Leo is taken aback by the article and says he is nobody. Fiks tells him, "Not any more." Mr Willis can't stop watching the video of Leo playing because he makes Shaka move so quickly.

Info page: Bellerophon – this hero is the son of the god Poseidon and was the monster-hunter of ancient Greece. He travels on Pegasus, a winged horse.

Glossary

Allure – attraction

Assegai – a spear that is thrown at the enemy during war

Combat – fighting

Dual-weapon – two-weapon

Gains enough momentum – is moving fast enough to be more powerful. For instance, if someone is spinning around and knocks into another person, they will do so with more force because the movement increases their force

Invincibility – if you are invincible, you are unbeatable

Levelled – See "levelling" in Chapter 1 glossary

Mesmerised – fascinated by/unable to look away

Notoriously – well known for something bad

Observer – a watcher/someone watching something or someone else

Plucky – brave

Skirmishes – fights (not a full-on battle)

Slay – "slay" can mean to kill, but in this context, it is more likely to have a more informal meaning – to "slay" can also mean to do very well at something

Solitaire – a card game

Taunt – mock

Wistfully – longingly

Questions

1. What was the reason for Mr Willis's calling Leo and Fiks?
2. Why do you think he whispered to them?

3. Onomatopoeia describes a word that sounds like its meaning, e.g., the word “crash” sounds a bit like the noise of a crash. Have a look at the sentence below. How does onomatopoeia illustrate the teacher’s eagerness?

Mr Willis waited for them to enter the classroom before closing the door with a snap. (p. 13)

4. Sum up the key points of the *T.I.N.* article on to how to play the character of King Shaka successfully. Use a bulleted list.
5. When Leo asks how the interviewer knows so much about him, Fiks responds with the question below. What rhetorical device is he using and why?

“Have you met Google?” asked Fiks. (p. 15)

6. After Leo sees the article, he says, “But I’m nobody” (p. 15). Is this a fact or an opinion?
7. Have a look at p. 15-16. How do we know that the attitudes of Fiks and Mr Willis towards Leo are different from Leo’s view of himself?
8. Have a look at the info page and the picture of Bellerophon. Consider what has just happened in Chapter 3. How might a character on a winged horse be symbolic of how Leo’s life could change?

Post-reading: Chapters 1 to 3

Why do you think that Leo has always viewed himself as a nobody? How do you think that his family view him and his gaming? Do you think that Fiks shares this view? Do you think that Leo’s view of himself will change now? Why/why not?

What do these three chapters show about the power of the internet? How can it help people’s skills to be recognised?

Chapter 4

Pre-reading

Glance briefly at the first ten lines of each page of this chapter. Then, pair up with the person sitting next to you, and sum up, in a few sentences, what the chapter is about.

Summary

Leo discovers that many children at his school also play TOGAH, and lots of them come to talk to him about the article on him. Lauren, his sister, doesn’t enjoy Leo’s fame and answering all the questions about her brother. Leo’s father tells him he got an email from the Ukraine from the coach of the Ukrainian TOGAH team, Team Odessa, who saw Leo playing TOGAH. The coach wants Leo to play for him in a competition. Leo’s father tells him that he hadn’t known about Leo’s interview. Leo’s father tells him he is impressed by the characteristics that Leo showed when he approached challenges in TOGAH and he is going to think about the coach’s proposal.

Glossary

Consideration – careful thought

Countless – very many

Fraction – here, a fraction means a small amount

Hounded – bothered

Initiative – if you use initiative, you are pro-active/you think intelligently of how to approach a problem or challenge

Intake of breath – this means to breathe in

Newfound – new/recently discovered

Oke – a person/a man

Slim smile – small smile

Swayed – influenced

Unconsciously – if you do something unconsciously, you do it without being aware of what you are doing

Questions

1. Describe how Leo’s school experience changes after the interview with *T.I.N.*
2. Why does Lauren throw a pillow at Leo?
3. What sort of man do you think Leo’s father is? Fill in the table below with characteristics in the left column and examples of these characteristics in the right column.

Characteristics of Leo’s father	Examples of these characteristics

4. Leo’s father has a fixed nighttime routine, but he breaks it tonight. What causes him to do so?
5. Why do you think Leo didn’t tell his father about the interview?
6. If you had to sum up the main point of this chapter in a single sentence, what would it be?
7. An important message that runs through this book is that gaming can have many benefits. Draw a spider diagram to illustrate the benefits mentioned in this chapter.
8. What is Leo’s reaction to his father’s news, and what does this show about his character?

Chapter 5

Pre-reading

The end of the previous chapter ends with the rhetorical question “How was this real?” (p. 23). How realistic does it seem to you that Leo has been invited to play TOGAH with the Ukrainian team? Do you know of similar experiences that ordinary people have had thanks to social media/videos going viral? Do you think that Leo’s father will agree to let Leo go, or will there be conflict? What information do you think the next chapter will reveal?

Summary

Fiks can’t believe Leo’s news that Team Odessa want Leo to play with them. Fiks says that the pro players make millions of American dollars. Fiks tells Leo that this opportunity means that Leo is going to become a professional. Fiks says that he will be Leo’s manager. Fiks is very excited for most of the day. Leo is still overwhelmed by what has happened, so he goes to spend some time on his own in the library during a free period. He’d begun playing TOGAH because he was bored and he had enjoyed hiding behind his gamer name, Leonidas. Now he feels pressure because he can’t hide behind his name any more. He worries that he might fail.

Info page: Hades is the Greek god of the Underworld. His ranking in the game is extremely difficult. He can call up more supporters than the other gods and is protected by Cerberus, a three-headed dog. He can turn into a ghost, and in this form, he cannot be hurt or killed.

Glossary

Biography – a book about someone’s life, written by someone else
Filled him in – told him what happened
Humiliated - embarrassed
Passion – a keen interest in something
Prehistoric – ancient
Retreating – hiding
Simultaneously – at the same time
Soapies – soap operas

Questions

1. What news did Leo tell Fiks?
2. How does Fiks feel about the news? Substantiate (give a reason for) your answer.
3. Why do you think Fiks is so excited by the news? Find three reasons from page 25, and paraphrase them (write these reasons in your own words).
4. Is it typical of Fiks to become excited in this way? Can you think of another instance when he acts in a similar way?
5. This chapter highlights a couple of key differences in the personalities of Leo and his friend. Name these, and quote to support your answers.
6. What fears cause Leo to feel there is "a pressure on him he had never felt before" (p. 26)?
7. What is the function of the rhetorical question that ends the chapter?

Chapter 6

Pre-reading

Hades, the god of the Underworld, whose info page appears at the end of the previous chapter, is one of the most difficult gods to conquer, and one of the reasons for this is that he can move out of existence and become a ghost: In other words, he can suddenly take on an unexpected form, which means that the way a player approaches him has to change because in ghost form, Hades cannot be killed or injured.

Consider whether Hades might be a symbol in the book of the fact that life can be full of unexpected changes. One aspect of Leo's life that seems to be the same as his father's is his attachment to the familiar: Leo's father likes routine while Leo likes playing the same character. How do you think Leo feels about unexpected change?

What positive unexpected change has happened so far in the book to Leo? How did Leo respond to it? Do you think that there may be negative unexpected experiences awaiting Leo as well? What might these be? How do you think Leo will respond?

Summary

The Jantjies family are watching sitcoms in the lounge as they do every Wednesday. Mr Jantjies's phone rings, and the call is for Leo. The person on the other side is Maxim, the coach of Team Odessa, asking Leo to come overseas for two weeks to play for his team at the Paris championship.

Glossary

Diva – a drama queen

Eased – gradually moved

Eavesdropping – listening to someone else's conversation

Fallout – according to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), "If you refer to the fallout from something that has happened, you mean the unpleasant consequences that follow it"

Hesitate – be unsure/wait

Hint of an accent – a slight accent

Jerked – jumped

Legendary – famous

Snuck – sneaked

Stern – strict

Strained to hear – did his best to hear

Questions

1. Have a look at the extract below. The second sentence is a fragment/an incomplete sentence because it doesn't have a subject and a verb. Why has the author used a fragment here?

*Leo's mother and his sister turned their attention back to the TV, but something made Leo hesitate. **A feeling.** He lifted his head to listen. (p. 30)*

2. Who is speaking to Leo's father?
3. Why do you think Leo "jerked in fright at the sound of his name" (p. 31)?
4. Sum up the main fact and two supporting facts in this chapter about the upcoming championship.
5. Explain the reason for the unusual spelling in the extract below. What is the intended effect of these words?

"Goot. I vant to talk to you about comink to play for Team Odessa at the Paris championship. I know you are younk, but I believe you are the player ve have been lookink for. It vill mean spendink two veeks in Paris vith us." (p. 31)

6. What does Leo think about himself? Quote to substantiate (prove) your answer.
7. Leo's sister says that he is "going to get a big head now" (p. 32). Does she mean it literally (will his head actually increase in size?) or figuratively (is this an expression that has another meaning? What does it mean if someone has a big head)?
8. Explain the implications of the words below, spoken by Leo's mom – that is, what is she suggesting?

"He's going to get a big head now." Lauren swished her long black hair over her shoulder. His mother shook her head. "We don't have room for two divas in this house." (p. 32)

9. Have a look at the word "fallout" in the extract below, which refers to negative consequences.

In her own way, his sister had managed to break the tension and his parents burst out laughing. Leo snuck back to his room to avoid the fallout from that question. (p. 32)

What is the denotative (literal) meaning of "radioactive fallout"? Provide a quote from a reliable dictionary.

Then, keeping this definition in mind, what are the connotations of the word *fallout* in the above extract?

Chapter 7

Pre-reading

Read the first sentence of Chapter 7, which provides the context for the chapter. What is the focus of the chapter going to be? Then, read the first paragraph. Which characters are introduced for the first time, and why are they important? How do you think they will respond to Leo?

Summary

Leo stares at the avatars in front of him, representing four players from the Ukrainian team: Vlad Dubyna, aka Count_V; SashaHorbulin, aka Lil_Maus; Oleh Sukholmin, aka Krusher; and Svitlana Volga, aka Miss_Match. The fifth player has retired at the age of sixteen. Coach Maxim is seventeen. Leo feels nervous. Leo and the others begin playing and are in the Underworld section. The other players say little and use one-word instructions – in Ukrainian. Leo realises that the others are expecting him to play within a specific section of the map until they get to the god Osiris. The god emerges brandishing his shepherd's crook that is his weapon. The other team members form a circle. Leo carefully takes his time until he can attack the god's unprotected chest with his spear. When he does so, the rest of the team attack together, and Osiris is beaten. The other players sign out of the game.

Info page: In real life, Florence Nightingale was a nurse who treated soldiers injured in the Crimean War. In the game, her lamp can heal other team members or be used to throw flames at the enemy.

Glossary

Avatar – according to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), "an avatar is an image that represents you on the screen in an online game or chatroom"

Carnage – carnage refers to the slaughter of others during war. If there has been lots of carnage, that means there are many dead bodies lying around
 Chariot – a vehicle that people sit in which is attached to horses who pull it, making it move
 Crook – a stick with a curved end used by shepherds
 Damage points – points that a gamer wins for causing damage to the opposition
 Flank – side
 Formidable – someone who is a formidable opponent is an opponent who is highly skilled/difficult to beat
 Hail of flashing hit points – the hit points keep falling down on the screen like hail stones, which are stones made of ice
 Hieroglyphics – Egyptian picture writing
 Hordes – large groups/crowds
 Hyperventilating – breathing too fast
 Logo – a small picture or design that represents a company or group. For instance, the logo for Odessa is a wolf's paw
 Precision – accuracy
 Signed out – left/quit
 Stakes – the prize or reward that someone will get if they succeed
 Stragglers – those left behind
 Strategic lineup – the lineup of characters shows that the players have thought carefully about the strategy that they want to use to win the game
 Vast – huge
 Zombies – dead people who have been turned into monsters

Questions

1. Who do the avatars represent?
2. Why are the avatars gathered together? What is going to happen in the chapter?
3. What is the setting of the game?
4. Explain in your own words how Leo feels at the start of the game? What evidence can you provide to show that he feels this way?
5. Provide an example of hyperbole (exaggeration) on page 34 that shows how Fiks is feeling.
6. Draw up a table that indicates, in your own words, why the choice of characters shows that the team have put a lot of thought into their strategy.

Character	Strategic benefits of the character
Alexander the Great	
Bellerophon	
Count Dracul	
Florence Nightingale	

7. How does the team attack the god, and how effective is the team's approach?
8. What does this suggest about teamwork?
9. Have a look at the picture of Florence Nightingale. The illustrator has drawn her with wings. What is the symbolism of this, do you think?

Post-reading: Chapters 4 to 7

Imagine you are Leo. Your life has changed dramatically in a short space of time since the video of you playing TOGAH went viral. Write a **blog post** in which you discuss these changes.

- How has your life changed, and how do people treat you differently now?
- How do you feel about this? Why do you feel this way?
- How do you feel about going to Paris? What are your fears?
- What are your hopes/dreams about the Paris competition?

Each of these points can be a separate paragraph. Use the information in *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship* to decide how you feel, and use your imagination as well where necessary.

Chapter 8

Pre-reading

Read the first sentence of paragraphs 1-4 on page 40 to get an idea of why Leo is feeling down. Then, scan through the rest of the chapter. Is there a sentence that operates as the main idea and resolves Leo's fears? What information do Leo's parents tell him about the Ukrainian coach?

Summary

Leo doesn't know whether he has passed Coach Maxim's test. He hears nothing and feels terrible, especially seeing that everyone at school is excited for him. Fiks admits that he told people about Team Odessa's interest in Leo. Leo thinks that they aren't going to choose him, but Fiks is sure they will. At dinner, the family are silent. Leo's mother asks why Leo is so unhappy and tells him that the Ukrainian coach emailed and wants to have a video call with him that evening.

Glossary

Chided – to chide someone means to tell them they have done something wrong

Max – this means "maximum"/at the most

Recruited – employed/asked to play for a team

Sprout – grow

Sulking – feeling down and not wanting to talk because things aren't going as expected or hoped

Swivelled – turned

Unravelling – untying

Questions

1. What happens following the game that Leo plays with the rest of the team?
2. Describe how Leo is feeling.
3. What does he want to do (p. 40) when he doesn't get an answer? What does this show us about Leo's confidence?
4. Read the interchange below between Fiks and Leo. Why does Fiks say he only told one or two people? Does Leo believe him? How do you know?

"Did you, um, tell anyone . . . about the Team Odessa thing?" Leo asked eventually. Fiks hesitated mid-bite. "Like one or two people, max." (p. 41)

5. Explain the literal and figurative meaning of "He didn't want to burst Fiks's bubble" (p. 41). Which meaning did the author intend?
6. Leo thinks that "that sort of fairy-tale ending just didn't happen for ordinary people, especially not thirteen-year-old boys from Bothasig" (p. 41). Is Fiks being unrealistic? Do you agree with Leo and why/why not?
7. The term "family dynamics" refers to how a family live/what their rules and beliefs are, e.g., about technology/screen time at meals/sharing news, etc. Have a look at the second paragraph of page 42. How might Leo's family dynamics have affected his reluctance to communicate information with others?
8. How much does Leo's mother value gaming? Quote a sentence to support your answer.
9. What evidence is there that Leo's dad also doesn't think gaming is that important? What message do you think the author is sending about these attitudes?
10. Leo's mood changes when he hears his father's words. Sum up what he discovers by answering the question words below:
Who contacts Leo's family?
What does he want?
When will they talk?
How will they communicate?
11. Why do you think the coach wants to speak to Leo?

Chapter 9

Pre-reading

Chapter 9 starts with the words "You're going *where*?"

How did the previous chapter end? Keeping this in mind, what do you think the connection is between the question at the start of Chapter 9 and the end of Chapter 8? Do you think that Leo has already spoken to the coach? What do you think the coach said to him?

Who do you think asks the question at the start of Chapter 9? Who do you think "you" is in the question? Where do you think this person is going?

Summary

Lauren is accompanying Leo to Paris during the school holidays when he plays in the esports competition. Lauren is suddenly being nice to Leo because she is excited about the trip. Leo wishes Fiks could come too. Leo tells Fiks about his video call with Maxim, the coach. Maxim is handsome and a year older than Lauren, who thinks he is attractive. Maxim lets Leo know the team were impressed by how he played. He says that the team deliberately didn't give him any instructions to see how Leo would respond. Fiks tells Leo he needs to get practising.

Fiks manages to get a ticket to go to Paris too because his father has free air miles. Leo is very happy. Fiks is already preparing for the trip. He has downloaded a translation app onto his phone and has been doing research on Team Odessa. Fiks says that he will be in charge of the organisation and administration related to the trip.

Info page: Queen Elizabeth is another hero in TOGAH. She was Queen of England from 1558 to 1603. Her reign involved lots of conflict, and in the game, she is an aggressive fighter. She has two modes, War mode, in which she has a weak attack but can withstand lots of damage, and Gloriana mode, in which her attack is more powerful but she is more easily damaged.

Glossary

Admin – administration (organisation of practical details, e.g., booking of tickets)

All-expenses paid – the costs of the trip (e.g., accommodation/travel/food) are covered, so Leo doesn't have to spend any money

Business associate – a fellow businessman or businesswoman

Casually – in a relaxed, informal way

Chaperone – a chaperon is a person who accompanies another, usually younger, person to take care of them and to make sure they are safe. In this chapter, "chaperone" is a verb, meaning "to accompany".

Lauren is going to accompany Leo in order to take care of him in Paris.

Free air miles – free air travel

Hollow – empty

Purposely – deliberately

Slacking – not working/being lazy

Sponsors – a company that pays the costs involved in gaming competitions, e.g., the cost for Leo to fly to Paris, in return for advertising of their product.

Tournament – competition

Questions

1. Have a look at the use of the italicised word "*where*" in the opening sentence of Chapter 9. Why is this word in italics?
2. Where is Leo going? Who is going with him?
3. Fiks whistles when Leo tells him he is going to Paris. Explain why he whistles. Why is this sentence an effective way for the author to describe how Fiks feels?
4. How does Leo feel about the upcoming adventure? How do you know? Refer to the text as proof.
5. Explain the effectiveness of the following metaphor (a comparison that doesn't use "like" or "as"): "The thought of his best friend not being there made him feel hollow inside" (p. 45). To do so, answer these questions:

What two things are being compared?

Then, are these two things the same in some way, which would make the metaphor effective?

6. Have a look at page 46. How do we know that Leo is still struggling to come to terms with the news?
7. When Fiks tells Leo he is coming too, are they standing together in person or communicating in a different way? How do you know?
8. Using the information on page 47, sum up what Fiks has done already and is going to do as Leo's manager in the diagram below.



9. Read the last few lines of the chapter. What can you infer/deduce (i.e., what do you suspect has happened) from this extract? What words have been omitted (left out)?

"Okay. I think I can handle that. Just don't get any weird official T-shirts made or anything." There was a long silence from the other end. "Fiks?"
"Yeah, about that . . ." (p. 48)

10. Reflect on the stance of Queen Elizabeth in the picture of her opposite the info page. What can you infer about her character from the way she stands?

Chapter 10

Pre-reading

The end of Chapter 9 concludes the South African part of this story. The setting now shifts to France. Sum up, in no more than five sentences, what has happened so far to get to this point.

As the setting changes, do you think there will be internal changes in Leo as well in the way he sees himself? What might these changes be? What challenges could he face in Paris?

Summary

Leo, Lauren and Fiks arrive at Charles de Gaulle airport and are met by Maxim. Lauren goes quiet when she sees Maxim, and he blushes. They will be staying in the seventh arrondissement, one of the districts of Paris. They will be close to the Eiffel Tower, and they will travel there by train. Maxim doesn't live in Paris. He says most of the team come from Kyiv.

On the train, Maxim tells Leo that in the competition, the team have to select characters from a pre-selected pool – those characters not part of the pool will be locked. The organisers will also select the maps that the gamers will use. He says that he suspects that the unpopular and difficult characters, like Shaka, will be in the pool, and that is why Leo will be his secret weapon. Fiks's mom has made caps for the boys with the word "Shaka" on them.

Glossary

Arrondissement – a district of Paris

Brandishing – waving
Charles de Gaulle airport – the airport in Paris
Eiffel Tower – one of the landmarks of Paris
Emblazoned – written very clearly, often in big, bright letters
Emerged – came out
Kyiv – the capital of the Ukraine
Passion - enthusiasm
Pre-selected – selected before
Unnaturally pink – pinker than normal

Questions

1. Who meets Leo, Lauren and Fiks at the airport in Paris?
2. What effect do Lauren and Maxim have on each other? Explain why this happens.
3. Where will they be staying? What famous landmark are they close to?
4. Have a look at the extract below. Judging by Leo's actions, how does he feel about Lauren's behaviour and why?

"Oh no, no, no," laughed Maxim. "Ve are just in trainink for the tournament. Most of us live in Kyiv. Maybe one day I vill show you?"
Lauren practically beamed and Leo rolled his eyes. So much for her soccer-player crush back in Bothasig. (p. 53)

5. In your own words, explain the rules of the tournament for this year.
6. Have a look at page 54. How does Leo view his abilities in general? Do you think this is a fact or an opinion?
7. How do you think the attitude of Leo's family towards TOGAH has affected him?
8. Have a look at your answer to Question 7 again. Does it affect your ideas about who the target audience of this book might be? Is it just for children/teenagers?

Chapter 11

Pre-reading

This chapter consists of two scenes. Read the first sentence of Chapter 11 for the setting – the hotel where Leo, Lauren and Fiks are staying. Then, jump to the last two sentences of the scene. These sentences refer to what is going to happen in the next scene to connect the two scenes together. How does Leo feel about meeting his teammates? Why do you think he feels this way?

Summary

The training compound is an old hotel. It is a very narrow building and bright yellow. Fiks and Leo are sharing a room, and their view is of the bricks from the building next door. There is a box on one of the beds with Leo's name on it. Inside the box, there is team equipment, including a shiny sweatshirt with a red hood and the Odessa logo – Leo's teamwear. The logos of the sponsors of the team are on the arm. Amongst the equipment is a cellphone. Leo has to meet the team and is terrified.

Leo knows all the players by face and name because of their fame. Vlad is the captain. He has a shaved head and thick eyebrows and looks sulky. Sasha is very energetic. Oleh has shoulder-length black hair. Svitlana's hair is purple and blue. Maxim comes in and apologises for being late – he was talking to Lauren. Maxim introduces Leo, but no one speaks. Vlad says Leo looks young, and Svitlana says that Leo is a baby. Maxim says that Leo is there to see what he can do and how they play. Maxim takes Leo to an unused computer to log him in. He explains the team's English is poor. Maxim will translate today but says that Lauren will assist with English lessons.

Info page: Count Vlad Dracul was the ruler of Romania from 1448 till 1476 and was well known and feared for his brutality during war. He was the inspiration behind *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. He can take a lot of damage and move on both ground and in the air.

Glossary

Batted – fluttered

Fictional – not real

Fray – fight

Impale – to stick a sword or similar weapon through someone

Inflict – cause

Lanyard – a cord that you wear around your neck. Leo’s lanyard has the word “player” on it to identify his role in the tournament

Pried – forced

Specialist – expert

Summoning – calling

Surly – sulky/unfriendly

Training compound – the area where the team will train

Withstand – endure/tolerate

Questions

1. Describe the setting of the training compound in your own words.
2. Reflect on the significance of the fact that the nice suitcase goes to Lauren. What does this say about how Leo is treated in the family?
3. What, in your opinion, is the most important item in the box, and why?
4. Do Leo and Lauren have an equal relationship? Why do you say this?
5. List the team members’ names and descriptions in the table below. Just use key words for the descriptions.

Name	Description

6. How do you think Leo experienced his introduction to the team?
7. Contrast Leo and Maxim’s views of Lauren. What has caused this difference in their views?
8. The info page describes Count Vlad Dracul. His cruelty made him feared by everyone, so he can be viewed as a symbol of fear. Considering this symbolism and the characters in this chapter, why is this an appropriate character to introduce at this point?

Post-reading: Chapters 8 to 11

Discuss with a partner:

These chapters contain a major turning point in the story as Leo shifts from being an average teen to being recruited by a famous esports team and flying to Paris to take part in the Esports World Championship.

Reflect on a time when you have had a major turning point in your life. What was this turning point? Did it affect the way you saw yourself, or others, or perhaps the way you lived your life? Do you think that Leo might also see life, or himself, differently after this experience? If so, how do you think he might change?

Chapter 12

Pre-reading

Considering the hero introduced in the info page at the end of the previous chapter, which Odessa Team member do you think might play a role in Chapter 12? Draw up a brief dialogue of how you imagine a conversation about what to expect in the tournament might go between this team member and Leo. Do you think he is as scary as he appears? Why/why not?

Summary

The team have long training sessions but everyone has to break for lunch, and in the late afternoon, Leo and Fiks can explore Paris. Leo wants to speak with Maxim about the team strategy, but both he and Lauren are not at the compound at the end of the day.

One afternoon, at the end of practice, Leo realises Vlad is still there. Leo asks if they can talk. Leo thanks Vlad for the opportunity to play with the team and says he (Leo) is a nobody. Leo asks what the tournaments are like as he has no idea what to expect. Vlad explains that each team plays on one side of the map. Minions will appear on both sides of the map, and the god will be in the middle of the map. The winning team is the one that kills the god or gets the most points.

Vlad tells Leo not to worry about the other team except when they choose their characters as this reveals their strategy. Then, he tells Leo, Team Odessa will choose a better strategy and stop thinking about the other team. Vlad tells Leo just to relax and to stick to the team plan. Fiks and Svitlana come towards them – they went out for ice cream. Leo would have liked to have had ice cream with them too. Leo and Svitlana saw Maxim and Lauren going to visit the Eiffel Tower. Vlad tells Leo to forget about sightseeing and to go and train with him.

Info page: Miyamoto Musashi was a Japanese warrior and famous as one of the world's best sword fighters ever. He can deliver a large amount of damage.

Glossary

Absent – away

Addressed – spoken to

Approached – came closer

Average – ordinary

Considered – thought about

Dual swordsmanship – someone who is good at dual swordsmanship fights with two swords at the same time

Exhaled – breathed out

Goofy – silly

Macarons – According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), a macaron is "a sweet snack consisting of two small macaroon biscuits surrounding a creamy filling"

Samurai – a warrior

Smirking – giving a satisfied smile. A smirk is a smile that someone gives when they are pleased with themselves

Stern – severe/unsmiling

Team strategy – the team's plan to win the tournament

Questions

1. Why couldn't Leo talk to Maxim about strategy?
2. Who does Leo talk to instead?
3. Have a look at the following lines from Vlad and Leo's conversation: What point is Vlad making?

Vlad blinked his blue eyes and waited for Leo to speak.

"I'm really grateful for the chance to play with you guys," Leo said. "I didn't think that was possible for someone like me."

"What do you mean, someone like you?"

Leo shrugged. "An average kid. A nobody."

Vlad's face remained stern. "Ve vere all nobody once. What is point?" (p. 63)

4. Draw a rough diagram to depict the online arena when two teams play a game in the competition. Underneath, sum up Vlad's strategy for winning in a single sentence.

5. Why does Svitlana clutch her heart when she talks about Maxim and Lauren? What symbolic meaning is she using here?
6. What similarity do you see between Miyamoto Musashi, the hero on the info page, and Leo at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 13

Pre-reading

The key events to note in this chapter are summed up in the first and last sentences of the chapter. The first sentence indicates the focus of the chapter What are the team going to be doing? The last sentence of the chapter refers to the location of the next day's photoshoot. Where will the team be going? How do you think Leo feels about this? How would you feel if you were him?

Summary

The team are doing drills in Vlad's room. Maxim asks who the best hero is against a sea god. Svitlana suggests Odysseus because of his sailing ability, and Sasha suggests Ragnar Lodbrok, who has weather magic. Leo gets the answer correct (Bellerophon), and Oleh says perhaps Leo will be useful after all. Maxim tells Leo that the sponsors have organised a photoshoot at Disneyland.

Glossary

Drills – repetitive practice
 Official jacket – team jacket
 Restore order – make the situation calm again
 Sprung – leapt/jumped
 Station – work area

Questions

1. The team is doing drills. What, in your opinion, would be the benefit of going over different scenarios and practising them?
2. What figure of speech is used in the underlined words? How effective is it?

Svitlana sat up straight in her seat and uncrossed her legs, like a soldier snapping to attention. (p. 68)

3. Leo answers Maxim's question correctly. How does this affect Oleh, and how do you think it affects the others – and Leo?
4. Leo asks himself a rhetorical question, "Could things get any better?" What do you think his answer would have been before Maxim came in?
5. How did Maxim's entry provide an answer to Leo's rhetorical question?
6. A cliffhanger is an exciting end to a chapter that makes readers want to find out what happens next. Why would the final two words of the chapter be considered a cliffhanger?

Chapter 14

Pre-reading

Have a look at the Disneyland Paris website: <https://www.disneylandparis.com/en-int/>

Which parts of Disneyland do you think would make the best settings for the next chapter and why? Where would you go if you were visiting Disneyland in Paris?

If you are interested, you can also look at a short video of Disneyland Paris here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzyqrXdDI4Y>

Summary

Leo feels like a celebrity at Disneyland. The team are wearing their official Team Odessa clothing and have their photos taken with Mickey Mouse and Captain Hook. Large groups of people photograph the Odessa team at the same time. Lauren combs Leo's hair in front of everyone, embarrassing him. Leo isn't sure how to pose for the photo. Lauren orders him to smile.

Leo has a great deal of fun and feels like he is in a movie. He and Fiks see as much as possible and go on many rides. They come across Vlad outside McDonald's and are surprised to see that he is smiling. They go with Sasha and Oleh to the racing-car ride.

Leo wishes his parents could be at Disneyland too. Sometimes people want to take a selfie with Leo. Fiks loves all the attention and tells everyone that Leo is the best King Shaka player. At the end of the day, Leo wants to sleep, but Maxim says that they have to practise more.

Glossary

Amusement park – a fun park, like Disneyland

Celebrity – famous person

Go-ahead – permission

Helium – a gas used to fill balloons

Lingered – stayed behind

Posed – if someone poses for a photo, they deliberately choose how they are going to stand or sit for a photo

Scattered – went in different directions

Sidelines – the side

Wailing – crying

Questions

1. Why did Leo experience what it is like to be a celebrity? List different experiences that he had.
2. What does the way that Lauren treats Leo say about her?
3. Contrast how the other team members pose for photos compared to Leo. What does this tell us about Leo?
4. Explain why Leo wishes his parents could have been at Disneyland. What does this show us about Leo?
5. Quote a simile that shows that Leo had a wonderful time at Disneyland.
6. What aspects of Disneyland were like a movie to Leo, do you think?

Chapter 15

Pre-reading

The first sentence of Chapter 15 is "The tournament was approaching fast" (p. 73). In the lead-up to the tournament, what tensions and conflict are likely to arise? What would cause these tensions?

How do you cope when you are stressed and in high-pressure situations? What techniques would you advise Leo to try? Share these with the person sitting next to you.

Summary

It is getting closer to the start of the tournament, and the training compound is becoming busier. Leo is finding the training schedule challenging. Leo sees a mindfulness coach. She asks him when he is most relaxed. He says when he goes with his family to the beach. Leo tries to imagine himself at the beach as she instructs him, but he gets distracted. The coach asks him to tell her how he feels when playing TOGAH. Leo says that he zones out and becomes his character. The coach tells him to remain in

character regardless of what else happens. She shows him how to breathe if he gets distracted. Leo hopes he won't embarrass himself when he plays in the tournament.

Glossary

Approaching – getting closer

Arena – the place where the tournament will be held

As instructed – as ordered

Assortment – collection

Breakout sessions – when a few people are taken from the rest of a bigger group to do something together

Comfy - comfortable

Gameplay – According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), “the gameplay of a computer game is the way that it is designed and the skills that you need in order to play it”, so in the context of Chapter 15, *gameplay* refers to different approaches to try out and practise when playing TOGAH, taking into account the design of the game and the skills the team would need to use

Gleeful – delighted/happy

Indicating – pointing to

Mindfulness coach – someone trained to help others keep their minds calm and focused

Nook - corner

Old-timey – old-fashioned

Prospect - possibility

Scenarios – different possible situations that might occur when playing TOGAH

Zone out – tune out/block out everything

Questions

1. Read Chapter 15 carefully. What is the chapter about? If you had to sum it up in one word, what would that word be?
2. Why is Leo so keen to do well in the competition? Quote a sentence from page 73.
3. Do you think that it is only to the team that Leo wants to prove himself?
4. The rest of the team go to Lauren for an English lesson, which shows that she kept her word of helping them to learn English. Are you surprised, considering what we know of Lauren so far?
5. Does Leo know what mindfulness is? Substantiate (support) your answer by referring to the text.
6. Read the definition of mindfulness in the glossary for this chapter, and have a look at one or two definitions in different dictionaries. Once you have done so, compile your own definition of *mindfulness* for Leo.
7. Why can't Leo concentrate on imagining the beach as the mindfulness coach instructs him to do?
8. Why hasn't Leo lost interest in TOGAH as he usually does when a game becomes difficult?
9. What do you think it means to Leo to have something that he sees as his “passion” and that he is good at?
10. What new aspects of gaming does this chapter reveal? Would these be beneficial skills in life? If so, what point do you think the author might be making about gaming here?

Post-reading: Chapters 12 to 15

With the exception of the chapter on Disneyland, most of the content of Chapters 12 to 15 is about preparation for the tournament. Chapters 12, 13 and 15 deal with different aspects of training for an esports competition.

Sum up each aspect of training with one word (e.g., strategy) then compare your answers to the answers of the person sitting next to you in class. Do you have the same answers? If not, what are the differences? Do either of you need to adjust your answers?

Chapter 16

Pre-reading

In this chapter, the team take a break because Maxim is worried that they are at risk of burning out. What is burn-out? Can you overwork? Google burn-out and its symptom and jot them down. Do you think that Leo could be at risk of burning out?

How might burn-out impact the effectiveness of the team? How might it be beneficial to the team to take a break?

Summary

The team get a day off as Maxim is concerned about their burning out. Lauren agrees reluctantly to take Leo and Fiks to see the sights of Paris.

Leo observes life in Paris. Everyone seems to live in apartments, and everyone walking seems to have a dog. The streets smell like burnt tyres. Paris is full of markets and gardens and many statues. Lauren takes many selfies. They walk along the river and stop at the bridge of padlocks and Fiks wonders if Lauren and Maxim put a padlock on the bridge. They see the Louvre. Leo discovers that Fiks has been making TikTok videos every day recording the trip of Team Shaka. Leo feels overwhelmed by the expectations people have of him.

Info page: Mulan was a Chinese warrior who disguised herself as a man so that she could fight in the army in her father's place.

Glossary

Accordion – a box-shaped musical instrument

Apartment buildings – blocks of flats

Arc de Triomphe – a famous arch in Paris. According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), this is “the triumphal arch in Paris begun by Napoleon I to commemorate his victories of 1805–6 and completed in 1836”

Backdrop – background

Burning out – becoming exhausted and overworked

Expectation – Expectations are the things people are expecting from Leo, e.g., to succeed and do well in the tournament

Feeble – weak/small

Hype – publicity. This word refers to all the things that Fiks is doing to make Leo well known and to show his progress, such as TikTok videos and the Shaka caps

Impression – your impression of something is your overall understanding/summary of what you have experienced or seen

Louvre – famous Paris museum and art gallery

Madeleine – a type of sponge cake

Métro – the Paris subway/underground

Mille-feuille – layers of pastry containing fillings, e.g., custard or cream

Portraits – pictures of people

Rare – unusual

Reluctantly – if you agree to do something reluctantly, you agree but aren't keen to do it

Questions

1. How do we know that Lauren wasn't that keen to go out with Fiks and Leo?
2. Explain how you think Lauren would rather have been spending the day based on previous chapters.
3. What clues about Leo's personality are provided in the first paragraph of Chapter 16?
4. Provide a bulleted list of the famous tourist attractions mentioned in this chapter.
5. What are the key overall impressions that Leo has of Paris?

6. Have a look at the following paragraph. What does this reveal about Lauren?

The walk took ages because Lauren wanted to take a picture with everything, from every possible angle. In fact, every storefront or market seller that looked remotely interesting became the backdrop to one of Lauren's hundreds of selfies. Sometimes Leo or Fiks had to take the picture so more of Lauren would be in the shot. (p. 78)

7. Explain what you think the meaning of the padlocks on the bridge is.
8. Is Leo comfortable with the TikTok video that Fiks is making? How do you know? Substantiate your answer by referring to how he acts when videoed.
9. Should Fiks have consulted Leo before making TikTok videos, in your opinion? Why/why not?
10. Consider the extract below: What is causing Leo to be under so much pressure?

*Leo didn't like letting people down, but he felt like everyone was racing ahead of him, and just expected that he was going to do great. He knew if he didn't voice what he was feeling, the hype would grow so big that he wouldn't be able to stop it from spinning out of control.
"Fiks, I know you're trying to support me," he said, hoping his words didn't sound mean, "but I can't deal with all this expectation. I'm worried it'll affect my focus." (p. 80)*

11. The info page on Mulan reveals that she was an imposter – she pretended to be someone else.

One way to interpret her symbolic meaning is that she represents imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome refers to people who are successful but who fear that underneath, they are no good/a fraud.

Two symptoms of imposter syndrome are
(1) worrying about not meeting people's expectations and
(2) doubting yourself (Cuncic, 2023).

Who in the story might be experiencing elements of imposter syndrome? What proof can you provide?

Chapter 17

Pre-reading

Skim through the first couple of pages that describe the first elimination round. What are some of the challenges that have to be faced? Do you think that Team Odessa will also find these challenges difficult?

Summary

The team gather in Vlad's room. It is the night of the first championship match. Leo is grateful that the team is starting to be friendlier to him. The tournament consists of six elimination rounds and ends with a final. The first match is between Team Cypher (Canada) and Team Jaguar (Brazil). The available pool of characters is a shock as it includes difficult characters: King Shaka, Queen Elizabeth and Buddha. Neither competing team gets to the god, and Team Cypher win by one point.

Glossary

Dawning horror – horror comes over Leo gradually as he realises that the stats in the games are changed back to level one

Declared – announced

Dominating – chaos and confusion are dominating the gameplay, which means that the main experiences in the game are chaos and confusion

Elimination rounds – the loser in each round is out of the competition

Lacked – didn't have

Monitor – computer screen

Notoriously hard-to-play – notorious means famous for bad reasons. For instance, Queen Elizabeth is well known/famous for being difficult to play

Paced – walked up and down repeatedly

Pool of characters – the available characters for teams to choose from for a specific round of the competition

Real-life equivalent – the real-life version of the character

Rendering – causing them to be/making them

Rival – enemy/opponent

Skirmishes – fights (they are less important than full-on battles)

Stacking up – building up

Stats – statistics

Virtually unplayable – almost impossible to play

Questions

1. Describe the setting of this scene
2. Why are the teams competing in this scene shocked?
3. A theme of this book is coping with unexpected situations. What unexpected situation does Leo realise he is going to have to face in the competition?
4. How does Leo react when he realises this? Evaluate how realistic his imaginary response is.
5. What fear causes Leo to react in this way – in other words, what is Leo frightened of?

Chapter 18

Pre-reading

In Chapter 18, Team Odessa are about to play their first game of the tournament. Glance through the first page of the chapter, and sum up the mood.

Jump to the first sentence of the next scene when Team Odessa arrive at the arena. How do you think Leo, considering his mood, will feel about the screaming crowds?

Read the final sentence of the chapter. What will the subject of Chapter 19 be?

Summary

A popular team, Team Xeno, are eliminated from the competition. Everyone is tense, especially Maxim. Leo struggles to sleep the night before their first match. Leo gets up and gets dressed and ready. Fans are screaming as Team Odessa arrive, and Leo feels frozen. The team go in the player entrance and to their waiting room, where there are water bottles, energy drinks and gum, which the team take to calm their nerves.

Maxim tells the team to choose a strong character first, like Shaka, and to stick to the game plan, forgetting about the other team. It is time to play.

Info page: Buddha is a very difficult character to play and not well equipped for battle. He can be used as a healer and can reincarnate.

Glossary

Barricade – a barrier

Buddhism – a major religion started by Buddha

Eliminated – kicked out of the competition

Enlightenment – according to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), in Buddhism, enlightenment “is a final spiritual state in which everything is understood and there is no more suffering or desire”

Equipped – having the necessary equipment. If you are poorly equipped, you do not have the necessary equipment

Freakishly quickly – weirdly fast/eerily fast
Meditative state – this refers to when Buddha is meditating, i.e., thinking calming thoughts
Momentarily – for a moment
Muffled – unclear
Reincarnation – rebirth. If Buddha dies, he can come back to life
Snappier – grumpier/more short-tempered
Tension – stress
Thumping - beating
Worst-case scenarios – imagining the worst that could happen

Questions

1. A key element of any story is conflict. What different types of conflict are evident in the first paragraph of page 87? Why is it so important to include conflict in a story?
2. Irony refers to a situation which is amusing or entertaining because it is not what is expected/often the opposite of what is expected. Why is it ironic that Maxim hired a mindfulness coach for the team members?
3. Contrast how Fiks and Leo are feeling about Team Odessa's first match by describing their actions.
4. How is Leo coping with being a celebrity? What evidence can you provide to support/substantiate your answer?
5. What is the mood in the waiting room? How do you know?
6. Discuss the role of teamwork in Team Odessa's strategy. How important is it?
7. How does the picture of Buddha reflect the fact that he is not a fighting character?

Chapter 19

Pre-reading

Buddha is discussed on the info page at the end of the previous chapter, which suggests that he might play a role in the next chapter. Glance quickly through the chapter to see where Buddha appears. What would be a benefit of having Buddha on the team, in spite of his weaknesses as a fighter?

Summary

Leo follows the team into the arena. The crowd start shouting, and Leo is blinded for a moment by the bright lights. Team Odessa go and sit in a glass bubble. Leo puts three pieces of gum into his mouth. His hands are shaking. The available characters appear, including Queen Elizabeth, Captain Blackbeard, Calamity Jane and finally King Shaka. The last character is Buddha, and there are no tanks.

Team Odessa win the toss and choose a character first. They pick Shaka. The other team deliberately choose Vlad's best character, Count Vlad Dracul. Team Odessa have to pick their characters strategically so that the other team don't have too many strong characters. Team Odessa end up with Musashi, Queen Elizabeth, Captain Blackbeard and then Buddha because they need a healer.

Once Leo's headphones go on, he feels like he becomes King Shaka. The characters are on the beach. Leo is ready, and he feels like this is what he is meant to do.

Glossary

Anticipation – waiting to see what will happen next
Booth – a small enclosed area
Cowgirl – a female cowboy
Dimmed – became less bright
Ghoulish – ghastly, disgusting
Hordes – crowds
Huddle – a group, crowded close together

Instant – moment
 Momentarily – for a moment/briefly
 Mounted – sitting on a horse
 Namesake – sharing a name
 Onward – forward
 Penetrate – enter
 Perimeter – the outside edges of the arena
 Qualifying matches – matches played to see which teams would get into the world championship
 Relatively – fairly
 Rigs – According to McGuigan (2023), a “gaming rig is a computer designed specifically to play computer games on” (para. 1)
 Riotous – very loud
 Ruff – a ruff is “a stiff strip of cloth or other material with many small folds in it, which some people wore round their neck in former times” (*Collins English Dictionary*, n.d.)
 Sacrificed – given up
 Scowling – glaring
 Shield – protect
 Signature character – the character associated with a specific player/a player’s favourite character
 Terrain - ground
 Uncertainty – not being sure what to do next/lack of confidence
 Virtual coin toss – an online coin toss using a computer programme, not a real coin toss with an actual coin

Questions

1. Have a look at the quote below. Why can’t Leo see at first when he enters the arena? What figure of speech is used below and why?

The crowds in the arena began to roar and Leo was momentarily blinded by the bright lights. (p. 92)

2. Describe the area where the team will sit while playing the game.
3. How is Leo feeling? How do you know this? Paraphrase from the text (give a reason from the text using your own words) to support your answer.
4. Seeing which character would have made Leo feel relieved?
5. How does Leo know they have won the coin toss when his eyes are closed?
6. What sacrifice does the team make? What does this reveal about the team’s values?
7. Leo feels that it will be his fault if they lose the game. Why? What is your opinion on this?
8. What effect does putting on the headphones have on Leo?

Post-reading: Chapters 16 to 19

These are chapters of rising action. The tension is building as it gets closer and closer to Team Odessa’s first match. Flip through Chapters 16 to 19 and jot down key times when characters are experiencing stress and what causes it. These chapters can be imagined a bit like a flight of stairs:



As the story progresses, the tension rises, just as a flight of stairs rises.

Then, the stress increases even further on the day of the first match. Write a brief summary of the first match day from Chapter 19 using a summary frame:

Summary Frame:

- Who are playing?
- What are they playing?
- Where are they playing?
- Why are they playing?
- How are they playing – how do they choose characters? How do they win?

Chapter 20

Pre-reading

Before starting Chapter 20, reread the final sentence of Chapter 19: "He was ready" (p. 96). What sort of result do you think this might foreshadow in Chapter 20 – in other words, do you think Team Odessa won the match?

Before reading the chapter to find out whether Team Odessa won, consider both possible outcomes. How do you think the outcome of the match might affect Leo if

- 1) They win
- 2) They lose?

Summary

Fiks says that Leo was incredible and that he moved really fast. Team Odessa won. Fiks goes to post a video about the victory. Coach Maxim leads Leo to the players' waiting room. Leo tells Maxim he failed because Shaka died. Maxim says that Leo played well and they won. Maxim reminds Leo that next time, Shaka may not be in the pool. They have to play with what they have. Maxim says they chose Leo because he is a very good King Shaka player but also because he is generally a very good player.

Leo thanks Maxim and says he needed the pep talk. His family aren't always supportive of his playing TOGAH. This tournament is a chance for him to prove that TOGAH matters and that he is good at something. Maxim replies that Team Odessa is so good because the players believe in themselves. No one else needs to believe in them.

Leo realises that Maxim is right and that he is really good at TOGAH. He feels exhausted but happy.

Glossary

Emerged – come out

Enormity – "Enormity" refers to something being very big. It could refer to the size the arena, but in this case, it also refers to how big the occasion is – all the noise, all the people and all the screens

Ground – Fiks helps to ground Leo; he helps him feel secure and able to cope better

Obliterated – killed

Panned – moved slowly around, looking at everything/scanning the arena slowly

Raucousness – very loud noise/rowdiness

Stunned - shocked

Questions

1. Who won the game?
2. How do Leo and Fiks see the game differently?
3. How is Leo coping with the fame he is experiencing?
4. Coach Maxim includes a warning for Leo below: What key theme does this tie in with ?

Next time King Shaka might not be in the pool, or Count Dracul. Ve use vhat ve are given and ve play our best game (pp. 98-99).

5. Why is Leo trying to prove himself?
6. How does Leo's perspective on proving himself change after speaking with Maxim?

7. How does this make him feel? Substantiate your opinion.

Chapter 21

Pre-reading

Have a look at the first paragraph about Team Traum. Traum is a German word meaning "Dream". What is the dream of the teams entering the competition? Team Odessa aims to achieve this dream through strategy and teamwork. What is Team Traum's approach? What factors could make Team Traum a real challenge? Who do you think will win? What do you think will give this winning team the advantage?

Summary

The next team that the Ukrainian team will compete against is Team Traum from Germany. It is an all-girl team – they are very aggressive and known for selecting powerful fighting characters. The captain, Angel, is famous. She is also Oleh's girlfriend. He says that they always kill his character first. Leo is too nervous to eat. Maxim tells Oleh that Angel is the enemy. They have to take her down. The team start throwing food at each other, and Fiks videos them.

Team Traum are the favourites – many in the crowd are wearing items advertising Team Traum. Leo tries to stay confident, both for himself and for his team. Oleh says that Team Odessa is going to be booed when they go on. This doesn't bother Svitlana. The crowd don't boo them, but they clearly prefer the other team. Leo feels less scared than before, but his hands still shake. Angel comes in, and Leo realises he will be competing against one of his heroes. He reminds himself that he deserves to be there.

King Shaka isn't part of the character pool, so Leo plays Mulan. Maxim had made Leo practise with other characters. Mulan is agile, and her sword can do lots of damage. Team Traum choose mostly attacking characters, indicating the game will be fast. Everyone is shouting through their headphones at the same time. Angel plays a South African hero, Modjadji the Rain Queen. She has the ability to summon storms and so destroys large numbers of enemies. Svitlana seems to view Angel as a rival and is determined to show she is better than her. She plays Florence Nightingale which means she can heal damaged players, something that Team Traum didn't bother with. Neither team reaches the god, but in the end, Florence Nightingale is still standing, and Team Odessa discover they have won by three points.

Glossary

Advantage – benefit
Aggressive – someone who is aggressive likes fighting and conflict
Agile – someone who is agile is a quick, confident mover/nimble
Arrow formation – the characters moved in the shape of an arrow
Composed of – made up of
Crammed - filled
Epic – dramatic, exciting, adventurous
Erupted – burst
File – walk in a single line
Foregone – given up
Hordes – large, rough groups
Personal mission – personal goal
Pumped – excited/enthusiastic
Racking up – collecting
Replenish – restore/build up
Resolve - determination
Summon – call up
Tally – the adding up of points
Underdog – the underdog is the team not expected to win

Questions

1. What is the main event that happens in this chapter?
2. What makes this match a bit more complicated, on a personal level?
3. How does Svitlana feel about the captain of Team Traum? How do you know?
4. Who are the favourites for the match?
5. How does Leo respond when he realises this?
6. How does Leo feel this time about competing in front of many spectators?
7. What is Leo's response when he sees Angel?
8. How do your answers to the above three questions show a change in Leo?

Chapter 22

Pre-reading

Chapter 22 provides a brief break from the tension of the competition and focuses on a phone conversation between Mr and Mrs Jantjies and the three teenagers, Leo, Fiks and Lauren.

Get together in groups of five and work out a brief enactment of how you think the phone call will go. What do you know of Mr and Mrs Jantjies so far? What questions do you think they will ask? What interest will they show in the matches and competition?

Using what you know of Fiks, Leo and Lauren, what will they talk about to Mr and Mrs Jantjies? How will they respond to what Mr and Mrs Jantjies say?

Act out the phone conversation in front of the class. Remember that conflict is a core element of any writing or acting in order to keep the attention of the audience!

Summary

Mr and Mrs Jantjies are speaking to their children and Fiks on the phone. They watched the previous night's match. Lauren and Leo and Fiks tell them some of the sightseeing they have done. Mr and Mrs Jantjies ask if they have been good, and they say yes even though they have been staying up late and eating unhealthy food and Lauren has been having a romance with the coach.

Mrs Jantjies says she can't wait to see them and they look forward to seeing Leo's big match. Mrs Jantjies is not pleased when she discovers there is an extra game she didn't know about as she doesn't really want to watch it, and Mr Jantjies is grumbling. Leo says that if they are not awake, they can watch one of Fiks's videos instead. Mrs Jantjies says she loves those videos.

Mr Jantjies says that the news is going to start soon and he needs to make tea. Lauren laughs and says that her parents don't even watch Leo's matches. Fiks tells Leo just to focus on the final.

Info page: Loki, or The Trickster, is a Norse god whose followers include shapeshifting monsters and huge wolves. He can transform himself into other beings, including humans, and can change characters into chickens.

Glossary

Attempted – tried

Confectionary – sweet baked items/chocolates/sweets

International – worldwide/global

Motioning – gesturing

Parisian – this is the proper adjective form of "Paris"

Shapeshifting – able to change into other beings, e.g., animals/people

Smirked – said smugly

The Seine – the name of a famous river in France

Transform – change

Unsuspecting – unaware of what to expect

Questions

1. Why has Leo placed his phone carefully so that his parents can't see his window?
2. Mr and Mrs Jantjies say that they watched the previous night's match and that they are looking forward to seeing the big match. Do they enjoy the matches?
3. How technologically literate is Mr Jantjies, i.e., is he good with technology? Substantiate your answer by referring to the text.
4. Why do you think Mr and Mrs Jantjies are so keen on Fiks's videos?
5. Have Mr and Mrs Jantjies changed at all? Give examples from the chapter to support your answer.
6. Why do you think Lauren is mean to her brother in the extract below? Is what she says accurate?

"I see your being an international celebrity hasn't gone to Mom and Dad's heads," Lauren smirked after they'd cut the call. "They don't even watch the matches!" Before she had even finished speaking, she burst out laughing, and continued as she returned to her own room.

"I see the old Lauren is back," muttered Leo.

"Don't worry about them," said Fiks. "Just focus on the final. That's all that matters." (p. 107)

7. How does Fiks's advice echo Maxim's on p. 99?
8. How does this chapter show that Leo has grown as a person?

Chapter 23

Pre-reading

The god Loki, whose info page appears at the end of this chapter, is a shapeshifter, which means he can transform himself into any other shape he wants. For instance, he can turn himself into animals or people. This means you can never predict exactly how Loki will look or what to expect from him. Thus, Loki, like Hades, can be seen as symbolic of how life is full of unexpected circumstances, when things don't happen as we have planned them.

What unexpected circumstances has Leo had to deal with so far?

What unexpected circumstances do you think he might have to cope with in the following chapters?

Summary

Coach Maxim is very tired. He reminds the team that they didn't stick to their planned strategy when playing Team Traum. He says the game was a mess. Leo blushes because he was so stressed in the game that he forgot about the strategy. Maxim says that Svitlana's focus was affected by her personal issues with Team Traum. Maxim says the team have to stick to their strategy or they risk losing everything.

Leo goes for a walk to buy pizza, and he sees other TOGAH players from Team Galaxy. He says hello, and one boy says he knows who Leo is. He calls Leo Maxim's secret weapon and says that Maxim's plan in inviting Leo to join the team was obvious to everyone and showed he was desperate. Leo doesn't argue with the boy who is bullying him because he doesn't want to respond in the way the boy wants. He feels embarrassed and stupid.

Glossary

Afriq du Sud – South Africa

Antics - behaviour

Assembled – met together

Barely – only just

Bonsoir – good evening

Brawling – fighting wildly

Button-pushers – literally, someone who likes to push buttons. Figuratively, someone who likes causing conflict with other people and starting fights

Distract – take away your focus

Foolish - stupid

Hushed – quiet

Participating – taking part

Puffy – swollen

Sarcastic – saying or doing something but meaning the opposite in order to be mean

Taunted – mocked/made fun of

Vendetta – having a grudge against someone and wanting revenge

Workshopping – “To workshop something is to develop it using the techniques of a workshop, with people sharing their knowledge and experience” (*Collins English Dictionary*, n.d.)

Questions

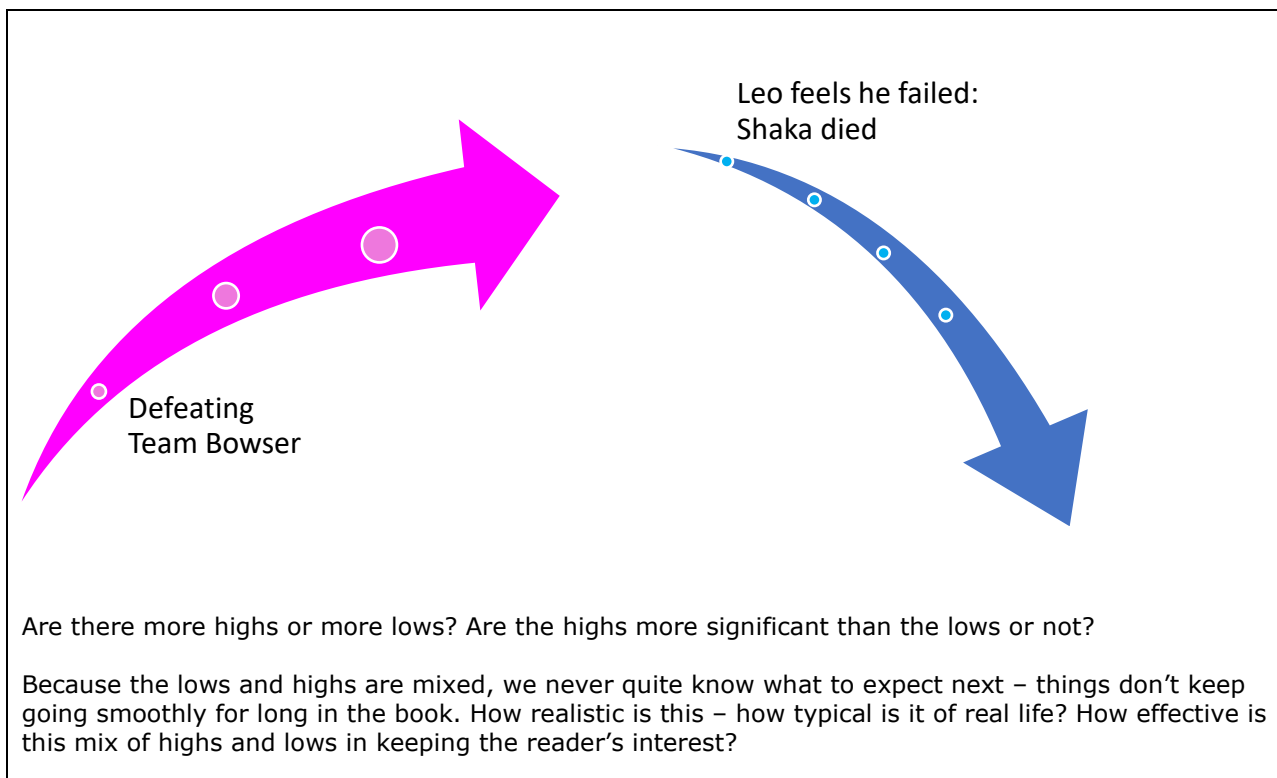
1. What has upset Coach Maxim about the last game the team played?
2. Reflect on the extract below. What figure of speech is being used when Maxim calls Svitlana “Calamity Jane” (p. 111)? Explain the effectiveness of this figure of speech.

“And you,” said Maxim, pointing at Svitlana. “Am I lookink at Calamity Jane right now? Because those vere cowboy antics. Ve are a team. Your personal vendetta against Team Traum affected your focus.” (p. 111)

3. Compare the friendliness of the Algerian pizza owners and the friendliness of the boy from Team Galaxy. What is the main difference?
4. How does the boy humiliate (embarrass) Leo?
5. Why doesn’t Leo argue with the boy? How does Leo respond instead?
6. Do you agree with the way that Leo responds?
7. The boy says, “Maybe if you watch close enough, you’ll learn something” (p. 113). What is he implying about Leo’s skills?
8. How does the boy’s bullying affect Leo’s confidence?
9. What do you think the boy wanted to achieve by his comments? What does this show us about him as a person?

Post-reading: Chapters 20 to 23

Chapters 20 to 23 capture a mixture of highs and lows for Leo. Depict this in a graphic form. A possible example of how to do this is shown below, with the highs on the pink arrow and the lows on the blue arrow. One example of a high and one example of a low have been done for you.



Chapter 24

Pre-reading

Have a look at the first sentence of Chapter 24. Using your knowledge of the previous chapter, who do you think Paul Turner is?

Then, what are the key points of this chapter? Glance through the chapter quickly. What has Paul done to Leo? How does this make Leo feel? How would you feel if you were Leo?

Summary

Leo tells Fiks about the unpleasant boy who bullied him. Fiks googles him, and discovers he is Paul Turner, also known as Rocket-Man. He is part of the Australian team. Fiks looks through his videos and sees that he is a mean person and arrogant. Leo discovers Paul has made a video about him. He looks at the video, in which Paul criticises Leo's character in a championship TOGAH game for being far away from the fighting.

Fiks takes away the phone and tells Leo that Paul edited the replay and selected a clip to make Leo look bad. He says it is fake news. Fiks says that Paul is criticising Leo's ability in order to entertain his viewers and to make himself look better.

Leo says that this competition is the hardest thing he has ever done. He has lost his appetite for his pizza.

Glossary

Aka – also known as

Credibility – believability/someone's value as a reliable person

Downplay – minimise/make it sound like something is not as important or good as it is

Filled in – told

Grudgingly – reluctantly/doing something unwillingly

Putting other players down – criticising other players

Questions

1. Who is Paul Turner?
2. What sort of person is Paul? Fill in the table below, and give examples as proof. The first one has been partly done for you.

Characteristic	Example from book
Popular	Give an example here, e.g., how many subscribers does he have?

3. How does Leo know that Fiks is lying when he says there is no video about Leo?
4. Why do you think Fiks tells Leo not to play the video?
5. Why does Fiks say that the video is fake news? List the different points that make the video's information untrustworthy.
6. Explain the following expression: "Maybe they couldn't find any deeper barrels to scrape the bottoms of" – what does this mean?
7. In reality, what was Leo doing when Paul said his character was running away?
8. Why does Paul blur the lines between reality and fiction here and create a false impression of Leo?
9. Leo says his brain feels "microwaved" (p. 117). What does this mean?
10. How does the bullying affect Leo?

Chapter 25

Pre-reading

Team Odessa are watching Team Galaxy, the team to which the bully Paul belongs, play Team Cypher. Leo and Fiks haven't told anyone else about Leo's meeting with Paul or the video. Do you think this is a good decision or not? Why? What could the benefits be if they told the team?

A key element of any good book is conflict and drama in order to keep the reader interested. Keeping this in mind and the tension between Paul and Leo, which team do you think will win this match – Paul's team (Team Galaxy) or Team Cypher? Why? How would this keep readers interested in the book?

Summary

Team Odessa gather in Vlad's room to watch Team Galaxy play Team Cypher. Team Galaxy win the toss and immediately choose King Shaka. Leo is shocked and convinced that they are doing it on purpose. Maxim also seems to think so as he is pacing. Team Galaxy win.

Glossary

Bloodbath – a bloodbath means many people die

Chance meeting – a meeting that isn't planned

Coincidence – chance

Confide – to confide in someone means to tell them what happened

Cyclops – a monster with one eye

Displaying – showing

Equal footing – equal in strength

Evaporated – disappeared

Flopped – collapsed

Gauge – if you try to gauge someone's expression, you try to work out what the person is feeling by looking at their expression

Gladiators – men who fought in the circus during the times of ancient Rome

Got underway – started

Launched – flung

Lumbering – walking heavily and clumsily

Mind games – when someone tries to upset another person’s calm and peace of mind by manipulating them, this is called playing mind games

Peak – highest, most exciting point

Prowess – skill

Resumed – started doing something again

Spectacularly – to lose spectacularly means to lose very badly

Stakes – the prize or reward that someone will get if they succeed

Questions

1. Why do Leo and Fiks hope that Team Galaxy will lose? Quote to give the answer, and then explain in your own words as well.
2. Have a look at the following quote. What are the stakes?

When the frites and milkshakes arrived, a cheer went up around the room. If the stakes weren't so high, it would have been the ultimate pyjama party. (p. 119)

3. What does Team Galaxy do to upset Leo?
4. What similar effect do Team Galaxy’s mind games have on Leo and Maxim?
5. Why is Leo reluctant to admit who he is talking about when he says that Pika_2 is out?
6. How does Maxim react when Pika_2 is out, and what does this show us about Maxim?
7. Explain the contradiction in the first line of the quote below:

Leo didn't want to watch any more but he couldn't tear his eyes away either. No matter how many fingers he crossed or how hard he wished, nothing was going to change the outcome. (p. 121)

8. Why do people cross fingers or wish? What does Leo realise about doing this?

Chapter 26

Pre-reading

Class discussion: Discuss the points below with your teacher and class.

Fiks says, “They’re going to do everything they can to get in your head” (p. 122).

- Who is Fiks talking about?
- What does it mean to get into someone’s head?
- What is the motivation for trying to get into Leo’s head?
- Have you ever experienced someone trying to get into your head when they were competing with you? What did they do? Were they successful? How did you respond?

Let everyone who wants to share give their ideas of how to stop someone getting inside your head, and your teacher can jot these ideas down on the board. Then, which of these suggestions could be helpful for Leo? How should Leo try to cope with this bullying he is experiencing?

Summary

Fiks and Leo are shopping, looking for presents for their families. Fiks warns Leo that Team Galaxy will try to affect Leo mentally because they want to win the tournament – winning means sponsorships, prize money and a better reputation.

The final is on Friday. Fiks says that they are going to go into media lockdown and not look at phones etc. to prevent the other team from upsetting Leo. Fiks will lock Leo’s phone away. Leo chooses his

mother a snowglobe. Fiks chooses his mom a pair of sunglasses. Leo says that his aunt has a list of food to buy. Fiks stops him because buying food means Leo will have to pay a fine at Customs.

When they get back, they are late for training. Maxim looks very stressed and tired. He has developed a new gameplay. He says the team must try to loop around and come at the enemy from behind. He is changing the plan because the other team have studied all their plans. Maxim knows that the other team know all about Leo and his skill with King Shaka. Leo confirms what Maxim says. Maxim closes his eyes and breathes to relax, as taught by the mindfulness coach.

Maxim says when they, Team Odessa, attack from behind it will give some of the heroes a chance to go forward to the god and get maximum points. Leo is surprised that the team members aren't bothered by his news about the video Paul made of him. All they care about is the game. Leo feels very stressed. Oleh says that he is going to be Leo's personal coach today and Leo is thrilled at the chance to learn from such a good player.

Glossary

Clunky – heavy, slow

Collided – ran into

Customs – the section of the airport which checks if you have brought anything into another country illegally and taxes certain items

Dismissively – if you are dismissive of something, you are saying that it won't work

Exhaled – breathed out

Forge onwards – to move forward steadily

Get in your head – to get into someone's head means to disturb their peace of mind

Inhaled – breathed in

Manic – crazy

Media lockdown – a media lockdown means Leo is not going to use any media (e.g., his phone) until after the final

Priceless – so special that it is beyond price

Reputation – how people sum you up or label you, e.g., you might have a reputation as the world's best gamer if you are an outstanding TOGAH player

Sidestepped – avoided

Souvenirs - gifts to remind you of a place you visited

Questions

1. What plan does Fiks think up to stop Team Galaxy upsetting Leo? How effective do you think Fiks's plan will be?
2. What impact has Fiks had on Leo, psychologically, as he has been dealing with bullying?
3. What message does this send about dealing with bullies?
4. What difference can be seen between Leo and Fiks in their responses to Aunty Lolly's request?
5. What evidence can you provide that Maxim is highly stressed?
6. Why has Maxim come up with a new plan?
7. What is the reaction of the team when they hear about Paul's treatment of Leo? How is it different from Leo's reaction to Paul?
8. If Leo had known how the team would react, do you think he would have told them earlier about Paul's behaviour? Why didn't he?

Chapter 27

Pre-reading

The hero in the info page at the end of this chapter is unique – the other heroes are people from the past. However, because "Modjadji" is the name given to the Rain Queen of the Balobedu people in South Africa, this means that the name refers both to the first Modjadji, crowned in 1800 (*Britannica Kids*, n.d.), and to each Rain Queen since.

A Rain Queen was crowned in 2003, Queen Makobo Modjadji VI, and the following link shows an excerpt from her coronation:

https://www.tiktok.com/@nextpage_za/video/7022630280842251521?lang=en

Queen Makobo passed away in 2005. She left behind two children, a boy called Lekukela Modjadji and a girl, Masalanabo Modjadji. Fascinating details of their battle for the crown can be found in the 2023 article below:

<https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/news/princess-masalanabo-modjadji-18-already-in-charge-of-balobedu-nation-979964b6-5e92-45d8-b347-75c0c4c82ed0>

Summary

Fiks confiscates Leo's phone but doesn't switch it off, so they can still hear messages coming through. Fiks tells Leo that he has set up WhatsApp groups for the final for their families, for their school and for their gaming buddies. Fiks laughs because Lauren posts a photo of herself and Maxim using the cartoon dog-face filter. Leo is able to focus on the game because Fiks takes care of everything else.

Fiks says that he will set up an appointment for Leo with the mindfulness coach and tells Leo that Mr Willis from their school says good luck. Maxim gives everyone green tea to help with concentration. He also orders everyone to go jogging as he believes a healthy body produces a healthy mind. Leo has no problem with jogging, but the other team members aren't happy. Lauren comes down in her tracksuit and pours herself green tea. She says that the run was her idea.

Leo has to go more slowly on the run as he is jogging with Sasha, but it gives him a chance to look at the river and buildings, some of them hundreds of years old.

Leo realises he has never heard the team talking about prize money- it doesn't seem important to them. He and Fiks had imagined that life as a pro-player must be about the best of everything whereas actually Team Odessa are humble and ordinary. He realises they are just like him.

Info page: Modjadji the Rain Queen was a warrior queen from South Africa. She has the ability to control the weather and can create terrible floods and storms.

Glossary

Antics – stupid behaviour

Assembled – gathered

Buddies – friends

Confiscated – taken away

Hilarious – very funny

Ignoring – not answering

My bad – my fault

Nutrition – diet/food

Relatively – fairly

Remainder – rest

Serenely – peacefully/calmly

Slide – leave it

Take in – absorb, notice properly

Questions

1. How good a manager is Fiks? How do you know? Provide a bulleted list of what he has done.
2. Has Lauren had an influence on Maxim? Provide evidence.
3. How is repetition used to emphasise the difference between Bothasig and Paris below? What other figure of speech is used in the following quotation to emphasise how Leo thinks of Bothasig?

It was nothing like Bothasig with its boring library, boring school buildings and boring town hall. (p. 130)

4. Compare Leo's expectations of how the pro-players would be with reality.
5. In previous chapters, Leo has said that he is a nobody compared to the others. How has his view of himself changed since then?

Post-reading: Chapters 24 to 27

Recap:

These four chapters have a common thread running through them: Paul Turner. How does he come into Leo's life? What do he and Team Galaxy do to unsettle Leo and to cause trouble with Team Odessa? What are the solutions that Leo, Fiks and Maxim come up with to confront these problems?

Chapter 28

Pre-reading

This chapter is very short, almost a summary of the team's preparations for the final. Just as the team are all very focused, so this chapter is focused and brief to reflect the way the team are working.

Think about how Leo has adjusted to being part of the team. How did he feel at the start of the trip? How does he feel now?

Summary

The team are training very hard. Fiks and Lauren keep the team going with food and drink. The team play many games of TOGAH and practise changing characters and strategies. Maxim thinks up many different gameplays. The team jog in the morning.

Too soon, it is Friday, the day of the final and the last day of Leo's being a member of Team Odessa. There is a lot of pressure on him. The sponsors arrange a lunch at Hard Rock Café. Then the team walk around Paris and visit Notre Dame cathedral. Leo is excited about the final and sad that the trip is almost over. Leo has learned a lot about himself and the importance of teamwork and believing in himself.

Glossary

Elaborate - complicated

Erasing - rubbing out

Macchiatos - a type of espresso coffee

Overdrive - if you go into overdrive you work extra hard/put extra energy into something

Pressure - stress

Sightseeing - looking at tourist attractions

Questions

1. How is Lauren helping the team?
2. Do you think this reflects a change of heart in her, or does she just want to impress Maxim? Give a reason for your answer.
3. Why is Friday such a big day?
4. What conflicting (clashing/opposite) emotions does Leo feel?
5. Explain the underlined metaphor below:

Now that she had her own Prince Charming, she was practically gleaming with happiness. (p. 135)

6. Sum up what life lessons Leo has learnt in Paris.

Chapter 29

Pre-reading

Because Team Galaxy have more points, they get to choose the first character. In a previous game, they played mind games with Team Odessa by choosing Shaka. Now Leo has to wait anxiously to see if they do it again.

Scan the pages quickly to see what Team Galaxy's first choice is. Why do you think they make this choice? Will it work for or against them?

Summary

Angel from Team Traum is at the breakfast table. She says that Leo is very talented and tells him just to focus on the game during the final. Besides the crowds in the arena, there are huge crowds watching the match on screens outside the arena. Half the arena is draped in purple light, Team Galaxy's colour, and the other half in red, the colour of Team Odessa.

Team Galaxy have more points, so they will get to choose the first character. Leo is worried Team Galaxy will choose Shaka. Leo's hands are shaking as they go into the arena.

The pool of characters appears. There are tanks but no healers. Leo is so anxious that Team Galaxy will choose Shaka that he is rocking in his chair. Maxim tells him to stop because the other team can see him and might be encouraged by Leo's anxiety to choose Shaka.

Team Galaxy select Shaka.

Glossary

Carbs – carbohydrates

Collided into – bumped into

Cyclone – a very powerful wind/a wind storm

In unison – together

Pain au chocolat – chocolate croissant

Plus-one – a partner

Reckoned – assumed/concluded

Rooted to the spot – unable to move

Stage fright – stage fright means that someone gets frightened/freezes when on a stage or when a large number of people are looking at them

Stomping – walking heavily

Stonily – with no expression on their faces

Uncharacteristically quiet – being unusually quiet

Questions

1. How is expectation built up on the first page of Chapter 29?
2. Why are Fiks and Leo so quiet at breakfast? Explain in your own words, and quote from the text.
3. What unexpected challenge does Leo need to deal with?
4. Leo thinks that "it wouldn't be fair" (p. 139) if the other team choose King Shaka. Is it fair? What does this experience say about life in general?
5. Discuss the effectiveness of the following metaphor: "Leo hoped his facial expression didn't betray the cyclone of fear and doubt inside him" (p. 139).
6. What is the motive for the other team's choosing King Shaka?
7. How does Leo's body language give away his emotions while he is waiting for Team Galaxy to pick their first character?
8. Why is the following sentence the final sentence of the chapter?

Team Galaxy's first pick was King Shaka. (p. 142)

Chapter 30

Pre-reading

How do you think Leo will cope with the fact that Team Galaxy have chosen King Shaka? Will it affect his game? How do you think that choosing King Shaka will affect Team Galaxy's game, considering that they are not experts in playing him? How do you think the rest of Team Odessa will react to Team Galaxy's selection of King Shaka?

Summary

Leo tries not to react when Team Galaxy choose King Shaka. Team Odessa will now choose Count Dracul first. Leo feels empty. Maxim takes Leo aside to talk to him. Maxim says that what has happened isn't a disaster. They knew the other team could choose Shaka, and Team Odessa know what to do.

Leo asks why Team Galaxy would choose a character they can't play well. Maxim says that Team Galaxy did so to affect Team Odessa's game and give them an advantage, but he says that Team Odessa is a better team – they play better together. Maxim tells Leo he is one of the best players in the world.

Leo will play the samurai Miyamoto Musashi.

Info page: Cleopatra ruled Egypt from 51 to 30 BC. Beautiful and ruthless, she is excellent in battle and can use the Poison Kiss, calling up snakes to attack the enemy.

Glossary

Brutal – cruel/violent

Gripped – held on tight

Impeding – slowing down

Inhaled – breathed in

Materialised - appeared

Motionless – not moving

Mounted – sitting on a horse

Prowess – skill

Sceptre – This "is an ornamental rod that a king or queen carries on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of his or her power" (*Collin English Dictionary*, n.d.). In the case of Cleopatra, the sceptre isn't just an ornament as she also uses it as a weapon

Summon – call up

Urge – desire

Questions

1. Compare how Leo acts with how he wants to act. What does this show us about Leo?
2. Why do you think that Team Odessa decide to select Count Dracul?
3. How is Leo's confidence affected by Team Galaxy's choosing King Shaka? How do you know?
4. Do you think this is the effect that Team Galaxy wanted to have on Leo?
5. Why do Leo's legs "feel like jelly" (p. 144)? Name and explain the effectiveness of this figure of speech.
6. Why do Maxim and Leo turn so that their backs are to the camera?
7. Why is Maxim not as worried as Leo?
8. Does Maxim believe that Leo's ability is linked only to his skill with King Shaka?
9. How does Leo show his courage and determination to win?

Chapter 31

Pre-reading

Think back to the strategy workshops and discussions that Team Odessa have had. What strategy will they use for the final? How successful do you think it will be?

Do you think that Leo is ready for the final? How do you think he will cope with playing the samurai rather than his favourite, King Shaka?

Summary

Leo takes a big breath and pushes aside his anxieties. The team have a new plan. He just has to focus on the game and play. They are in the Underworld for the final, which is filled with stalactites. Those characters mounted on horses get behind the enemies, round them up and destroy them. This enables Queen Elizabeth (Sasha's character), Vlad Dracul (Vlad's character) and Miyamoto Musashi (Leo's character) to get past.

The next enemy is the Sphinx, a monster, and Vlad Dracul and Leo's samurai are the ones able to get near enough to attack. The sphinx turns into a huge green snake, and the team realise that the god in this game must be Loki, the shapeshifter, who also has monsters that can change shape, like the Sphinx does.

Leo's character is killed, but Maxim says that he lasted much longer than Team Galaxy's Shaka did. The rest of the team attack the huge snake, and now they have reached the god.

The god Loki appears, and Team Odessa attack. They beat Loki, and they win the championship!

Glossary

Cavern – cave

Confetti – tiny pieces of paper thrown at a wedding or another type of celebration

Eerie – strange/scary

Enveloped - surrounded

Evade - avoid

Materialise – appear

Mounted players – players on horseback

Opponent – enemy

Poised – ready and waiting

Realm – kingdom

Shuddered – if someone shudders, their body shakes in fear, horror or disgust

Skeletal remains – skeletons

Stalactites – columns of ice

Questions

1. Have a look at the first paragraph. How do we know that the rest of the team are ready to start playing?
2. The game takes place in the Underworld. Whose kingdom do Leo and Vlad think they are in? When do they realise they are wrong and why?
3. How do Team Odessa fight the skeletons?
4. What is the effect of their strategy?
5. Which of Team Galaxy's characters falls first? What does this suggest about their strategy?
6. How do Team Odessa respond when they win? What does this say about their commitment to teamwork?

Chapter 32

Pre-reading

Read the first sentence of Chapter 32. What do you think is going through Leo's head as he packs? What aspects of his trip is he thinking of? How does he feel about going home? What dreams might he have for the future?

Is he the same boy who left for Paris a couple of weeks ago, or has he changed? If he has changed, how is he different?

Summary

Leo wants to be alone as he packs. He knows his adventure is over. Fiks has been up all night, partying. Fiks says that Maxim is looking for Leo. Leo tells Maxim he doesn't know how to thank him and that it still doesn't feel real. Maxim says it is he who owes Leo, and he gives him his prize money.

Maxim wants Leo to remain a full-time part of Team Odessa. Lauren has asked Maxim to be her boyfriend, and he is coming out to visit her in Cape Town. Leo is amazed at how much money he has won for his portion of the prize.

Glossary

Comprehend - understand

Expectantly - waiting to see if he hears what he wants to hear

Portion - percentage/part

Sniggered - a disrespectful laugh. According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), "if someone sniggers, they laugh quietly in a disrespectful way, for example at something rude or unkind"

Warmly - in a friendly way

Questions

1. Compare how Fiks and Leo's actions at the start of this chapter show the differences in their characters.
2. Why does Maxim say that it is he who should thank Leo?
3. Irony refers to a situation which is amusing or entertaining because it is not what is expected/often the opposite of what is expected. Comment on the irony of the following words:

Maxim shook his head. "No, it is I who owe you. You have no idea how much." He slid over an envelope. Leo took it, but didn't open it. (p. 154)

4. What offer does Maxim make to Leo?
5. Why is Maxim going to see Leo in a month?
6. The below extract describes Leo's feelings about Paris. Why does Leo see Paris differently now?

Leo smiled. "I'll be right there." He also wanted to take one last look at the city. When he'd first arrived, he'd thought it was smelly and noisy, and completely different to what he was used to. But Paris had grown on him, and he felt at home - as much as you could feel at home in a place where you couldn't speak the language. (p. 155)

7. How does Leo's changing view of Paris reflect his changing view of himself?

Post-reading: Chapters 28 to 32

In the final chapter, Leo says, "I can't believe it's over. Somehow it still doesn't feel real. Any of it" (p. 154).

Why doesn't it feel real to Leo? Leo has to grapple with reality (what is real) and appearance (what he thinks is real) throughout the story. At the start of the book, for example, does Leo have a realistic view of himself, or does he undervalue himself? How does he discover the real Leo?

Section 3: Enrichment exercises

3.1 Interview with Shaka

Have a look at the following clip about Shaka: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9McXPnFTpk>

Then, find out more about this South African hero here: <https://www.dw.com/en/shaka-zulu-founding-father-of-the-zulu-nation/a-52448409>

- What do you think made Shaka a hero?
- Write up an imaginary interview with Shaka. Ask him questions about his greatest dreams, achievements, and regrets, what motivated him and what he wants his legacy to be (how does he want people today to remember him)?
- Use the article above as well as research of your own so that the answers you write are based on how you imagine he felt about actual experiences he had in his life.
- Write the interview in the form of a dialogue. Because this is a conversation, the **register** can be **informal** – in other words, you can use a more informal, colloquial (conversational) tone. Here is an example of a few lines of an imaginary interview with American civil rights activist Martin Luther King:

Interviewer: So, tell me, what were your greatest dreams?

Martin Luther King: I always dreamt of a society where people could live together as equals. You know, there was so much inequality – life was so unfair for so many Americans. Did you know that different races couldn't even go to the same schools?

3.2 Writing a paragraph on your hero

What characteristics, in your opinion, make someone a hero? Who do you know who possesses these characteristics? Write a topic sentence below that names this hero and sums up these characteristics.

A **topic sentence** is the first sentence of a paragraph, which sums up that paragraph.

Here is an example:

Jane Goodall is an example of a hero because of her **groundbreaking research**, her **compassion** towards animals, and her commitment to **environmental protection**.

Next, write a paragraph in which you discuss how your hero exhibits these characteristics. Here is an example using the above topic sentence on Jane Goodall:

Jane Goodall is an example of a hero because of her **groundbreaking research**, her **compassion** towards animals, and her commitment to **environmental protection**. *First*, Goodall has conducted **fascinating research** on chimpanzees that has transformed people's understanding of primates. *For instance*, it was Goodall who discovered that humans are not the only living beings that are able to use tools – she observed chimpanzees stripping the leaves off sticks to create tools that they could insert into termite heaps to pull out termites to eat. *In addition*, Goodall's **compassion** towards all animals makes her a hero. *An example of this is* her commitment to protecting animals that have been trafficked and kept in horrendous conditions – *for instance*, the Jane Goodall Institute supports laws that protect wild animals and Jane's Traffic Stop has encouraged people to become more aware of, and fight against, the trafficking of wild animals. *Moreover*, Goodall is a role model because of her dedicated work aimed at **protecting the environment**. *Evidence of this* is found in her travels around the world giving talks about greater environmental responsibility and her creation of Roots and Shoots youth programmes, which have promoted conservation in almost 100 countries.

If we break down this paragraph into its key elements, it will look like this:

Topic sentence	Jane Goodall is an example of a hero because of her groundbreaking research , her compassion towards animals, and her commitment to environmental protection .
The first characteristic of my hero	<u>First</u> , Goodall has conducted fascinating research . . .
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	<u>For instance</u> , it was Goodall who discovered that humans are not the only living beings that are able to use tools ...
The second characteristic of my hero	<u>In addition</u> , Goodall's compassion towards all animals . . .
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	<u>An example of this is</u> . . .
The third characteristic of my hero	<u>Moreover</u> , Goodall is a role model because of her dedicated work aimed at protecting the environment .
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	<u>Evidence of this</u> is found in . . .

I have connected the sentences using transition words, which I have underlined and italicized above – these are words that *show the connection* between sentences:

- The **transitions** that connect the three characteristics that make Goodall a hero are first, in addition and moreover.
- The **transitions** that introduce examples are For instance, an example of this is and evidence of this is found in.

Now, use the table below to construct your own paragraph before putting your sentences together into a single paragraph:

Topic sentence	
The first characteristic of my hero	
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	
The second characteristic of my hero	
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	
The third characteristic of my hero	
A specific example to illustrate this characteristic	
Now, go back and check that each characteristic and each example is introduced with a transition .	

3.3 Creating a symbolic illustration of your hero

Have a look at the illustrations of the heroes in *Leo Jantjies and the Esports World Championship* again. They are highly detailed and contain symbols – clues about the character and skills of the person. For instance, Florence Nightingale contains wings to symbolise that she is like a guardian angel to the other

team members, healing them when they are injured. Shaka holds two spears and wears armour to show that he is a warrior. Draw a picture of your hero. Add key details in the picture that symbolise the kind of person he or she is and that illustrate the characteristics that make your hero special. Underneath your picture, write a few sentences explaining the symbolic meaning of the details you have included in the drawing.

3.4 Rap song using metaphors and similes

Metaphors and similes are used in writing to make it more descriptive and to create a vivid image. A metaphor is a comparison that doesn't use the words "like" or "as", e.g., "that crook is a snake." Here, the crook is being compared to a snake (they are both dangerous and capable of violence/not to be trusted), but the words "like" and "as" are not used.

Simile: A simile compares two things using the word "like" or "as". For instance, "that crooks is as untrustworthy as a snake".

Write your own rap song praising a hero of your choice. Use metaphors and similes in your song to describe your hero.

3.5 Speech: Who is the true leader of the Balobedu?

Have a look at Dr Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech in the link at the bottom of this table. As you listen and read the subtitles, look for important rhetorical devices that he uses to persuade his audience, such as the following:

- **Facts/proof** and important **documents** and **respected people** that support his argument
(“When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note . . . that all men — yes, Black men as well as white men — would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”)
- Language that creates **strong emotions** in the audience
(“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color [sic] of their skin.”)
- **Personal pronouns** (we/us/my/you) to create a personal connection with the audience
- **Repetition** (“I have a dream . . . I have a dream”) to keep the key points of the speech in mind
- **Figures of speech** such as alliteration and metaphors (“Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation”)

Link: Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vP4iY1TtS3s>

You are going to write your own speech now. Have a look again at the story of South Africa's current Modjadji, leader of the Balobedu, and the battle for the crown between two siblings, Lekukela Modjadji and Masalanabo Modjadji. Consult the following article for more details:

<https://www.citizen.co.za/letaba-herald/news-headlines/local-news/2023/02/20/battle-for-modjadji-rain-throne-continues/>

Find other sources as well to get a full picture of the arguments of both sides. Write down these arguments, and then, decide whose side you support. Why do you support this person as the true Modjadji? Why are their arguments stronger than the arguments of the other sibling? Then, in class, you are going to argue in favour of the person you support. As in Martin Luther King's speech, use the following:

- Facts/proof
- References to important documents (such as the Constitution) and the views of respected people
- Language that creates strong emotions in the audience
- Use of personal pronouns (we/us/my/you) to create a personal connection with the audience
- Repetition to keep the key points of the speech in mind
- A couple of figures of speech, such as alliteration/metaphors/similes, etc.

Section 4: Suggested answers

Chapter 1

1. Leo Jantjies.
2. Leo is playing the game TOGAH – he is playing the character of King Shaka.
3. Theatre of Gods and Heroes.
4. The goal of the game is to defeat the gods. Heroes need to work together in teams (clans) and beat the gods' supporters (monsters and other followers). Then, they can confront and fight a god. If they beat the god, they get to the next level.
5. Very effective. Leo throws his spear like a javelin, hitting the god Anubis in the chest. Anubis's health bar flickers and gets smaller and then the character disappears as he is defeated.
6. They are both annoyed with Leo. His sister, Lauren, says that she had to feed the dogs the previous day and that Leo is smelly and his hair is messy. His mother gives him "the look" (p. 4) because she is irritated that he has been gaming all night and didn't eat his supper.
7. Leo has a real passion for gaming. He finds gaming all-absorbing because he even forgets what day it is and plays all night.

Chapter 2

1. Fiks sounds like someone who doesn't mind breaking the rules and can be resistant to authority. For instance, he doesn't like his school uniform and pulls out one side of the collar. He also tells Leo that Leo has to reply to *T.I.N.* immediately even though it might make the boys late for school.
2. The way Fiks pulls out his collar "made it look **like** he'd got dressed in a hurry and hadn't looked in a mirror" (p. 6).
3. This relates to an important theme in the book, namely the value of teamwork. The fact that players are not supposed to go off on their own but work with others suggests that there may be benefits to working in a team.
4. This is called an acronym. *T.I.N.* is short for *TOGAH Insider News*. Another example is VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol.
5. Leo tells Fiks that he has been contacted by *T.I.N.* for an interview. Fiks is thrilled because he knows the website is international and plays an important role in livestreaming gaming competitions.
6. Eleven guilds have contacted Leo, wanting him on their team.
7. Student's own answer. Leo probably takes such a long time because he is so knowledgeable and has so much to share.
8. Fiks often watches Leo stream his games and encourages him using VoIP, a messaging app. He is also the only person, until the interview, who has asked Leo about his gaming strategy. This suggests that Fiks is supportive of his friend and recognises and values his knowledge and skill.
9. One reason that King Shaka is discussed first is that he is Leo's character in TOGAH, and so he has an important role in the story. However, another reason could be that the author wants to emphasise the importance of South African heroes such as King Shaka by placing him in a prominent position.
10. Shaka wears armour on his legs and arms as well as carrying two assegais. These details suggest that he is a warrior. His height and powerful body suggest that he is fit and strong and an excellent warrior. His face looks stern as though he has an important purpose to fulfil.

Chapter 3

1. He wanted to show Leo and Fiks the article about Leo.
2. He doesn't want the other teachers to know that he is discussing gaming with the boys during school time.
3. The word "snap" is an example of onomatopoeia as it sounds like a door shutting quickly and sharply with click. The word "snap" shows the teacher's keenness to talk to the boys because he shuts the door as quickly as possible so that he can show them the article.
4. Bulleted list:
 - Be quick – have fast reflexes.
 - Focus well.

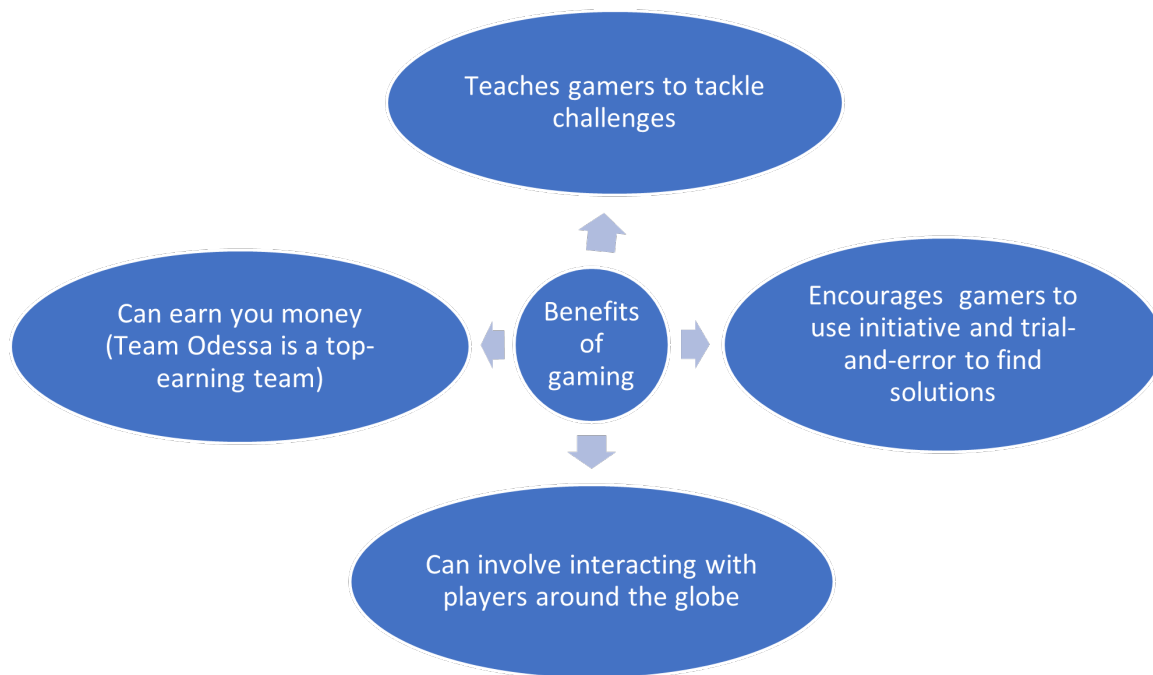
- Use Shaka’s momentum, and let him use two weapons at the same time – the spear, which can also act like a shield, and the shield, which can also be used to attack.
 - Attack continually.
 - Use Shaka instead of a tank.
5. Fiks is asking a question to which he doesn’t expect an answer, which is called a rhetorical question. Fiks is using this question to tease Leo for not thinking of an obvious answer to his question.
 6. This is an opinion. Others do not think this way. For instance, neither Mr Willis nor Fiks would call Leo a nobody.
 7. While Leo thinks he is unimportant/“a nobody” (p. 15), Mr Willis thinks Leo has accomplished a wonderful achievement, calling Leo’s success at TOGAH “really awesome” (p. 15). He is obviously very impressed by Leo’s speed and skill because he can’t stop watching the video of Leo playing Shaka – he is “mesmerised” (p. 16) and calls Leo’s ability “incredible” (p. 16). Fiks tells Leo that he is not a nobody now (because everyone knows about him).
 8. Now that Leo has become known as an excellent TOGAH player, his career may be about to soar/to fly – just as Bellerophon, the famous god was able to fly on his winged horse, Pegasus. The hero Bellerophon is symbolic of Leo’s potential – he is able to rise above his current life and accomplish more due to his skill at TOGAH.

Chapter 4

1. Leo finds out that many others at his school also play TOGAH. He becomes popular with children who have never spoken to him and now want to chat to him about the article.
2. Lauren feels resentful of Leo’s fame – she doesn’t like people asking her questions about her little brother, and the boy she likes won’t speak to her any more because she is getting so much attention from TOGAH enthusiasts at school.
- 3.

Characteristics of Leo’s father	Examples of these characteristics
Likes routine	Each evening, he does the same things: has dinner, baths, puts on pyjamas, watches the news, reads, and goes to bed.
Proud	He irons his clothes each morning.
Reflective	He tends to think carefully about what to say. He thinks about Leo’s interview and reflects on the positives he sees in the way that Leo approaches gaming. He says he will think about the proposal from the Ukraine coach before making a decision.
Intelligent	Leo realises he doesn’t need to warn his father about scams.

4. He wants to speak to Leo about the offer he has had from the Ukraine coach of Team Odessa for Leo to join their team for a competition.
5. Student’s own answer. Maybe Leo thought his dad wouldn’t be supportive because Leo already spends so much time gaming. Or maybe Leo felt shy because of all the attention the interview has brought him and was reluctant to draw more attention to himself – he says to his father, “It didn’t seem like a big deal” (p. 22). This shows that Leo is modest and also that he still tends to think of himself as someone unimportant.
6. The coach of the Ukrainian TOGAH team, called Team Odessa, has invited Leo to take part in a competition.
- 7.



8. Leo can't believe the news. He is too scared to say anything in case it influences his father's decision, but in his head, there is a voice screaming with excitement because a famous team knows him and wants him to play for them. He asks the rhetorical question, "How was this real?" (p. 23) because he can't quite believe the news. This reaction shows that he lacks confidence in himself and is reluctant to show his true feelings.

Chapter 5

1. Leo told Fiks that he has been invited to play TOGAH for Team Odessa.
2. Fiks is overcome with excitement. We can see this because he put his head in his hands and is speechless and out of breath (p. 24).
3. Fiks is excited because of the money Leo can earn, because Leo is becoming a professional gamer and because he can be Leo's manager.
4. Yes. When Leo tells him that *T.I.N.* want to interview him, Fiks stops walking, grabs his friend by the collar and insists that they reply immediately, even if it means being late for school.
5. Fiks is **excitable** - when Fiks heard Leo's news, he "kept lifting his head and opening his mouth as if he was about to speak, only to close it again . . . Fiks seemed to simultaneously lose the ability to speak and breathe" (p. 24). Leo is much less excitable - he waits "for his best friend to calm down" (p. 24).

Fiks is **noisy** and **wants to talk** about the invitation whereas **Leo is less keen to talk** about it - "it took Leo almost the entire day to get his best friend's mind off the email. Even during class, when Fiks seemed completely focused on what the teacher was saying, he'd suddenly start talking about the opportunities joining Team Odessa would create" (p. 25).

Leo is also **quieter** than his friend - he goes to the library to be on his own and "to get some breathing space" (p. 26).

6. Leo can no longer remain anonymous and hide behind his gamer name, Leonidas. There are huge expectations of him because he has been called "the best" (p. 26), which makes him fearful - he is scared in case this is not true, and he is scared that he might fail and be humiliated before the whole world.
7. The function of this question is to be a cliffhanger. This is a sentence found at the end of a chapter that creates tension in the reader and make them want to read more to find out what happen next.

Chapter 6

1. A fragment is used here to emphasise these words and explain what the "something" was that caused Leo to hesitate.
2. Maxim, the coach of Team Odessa.
3. He jerked because he was anxious when his suspicions were confirmed that his father was discussing him.
4. Maxim wants Leo to come to Paris to play in the gaming championship **[main fact]**.
 - Leo will be away for two weeks.
 - A team request will be sent to Leo so he can play a game with Team Odessa **[supporting points]**.
5. Words like "Goot" and "vant" are used to reflect the pronunciation of Maxim.
6. Leo doesn't believe in himself – he is convinced the coach has contacted the wrong person, and he wonders if it was just luck that made him play King Shaka so well.
7. Lauren means this figuratively. To have a big head means to be conceited or vain.
8. The implication is that Lauren is a diva.
9. According to *Collins English Dictionary* (n.d.), "Fallout is the radiation that affects a particular place or area after a nuclear explosion has taken place". The connotations here are that when Lauren works out what her mother means, she is going to explode with anger and that the consequences will be unpleasant and dangerous, just as exposure to radiation is extremely unpleasant and dangerous.

Chapter 7

1. The avatars represent the members of Team Odessa, the Ukrainian team.
2. The avatars are waiting for Leo to join them online so that they can play TOGAH as a team.
3. The Underworld
4. Leo feels very anxious. We know this because he "clutched his hands between his knees and bounced his feet on the carpet " (p. 33). He also is unable to move his hands.
5. Fiks says that Leo is giving him a heart attack.
- 6.

Character	Strategic benefits of the character
Alexander the Great	Acts like a tank that can destroy lots of enemies at a time and get hit many times without being killed
Bellerophon	Can fly and attack from anywhere
Count Dracul	Can fly and attack from anywhere
Florence Nightingale	Can heal members of the team who are injured and can attack from a distance, shooting fire out of her lamp

7. The team work together, positioned in a circle. Florence Nightingale is outside the circle, ready to support the others when needed. Leo attacks Osiris's exposed chest, which gives the others the chance to attack together. This approach is effective because they defeat Osiris.
8. The success of their approach when they work together suggests that teamwork/being able to work as a team is a key factor in winning.
9. The wings look similar to those of an angel. This could symbolise that Florence is seen as an angel – an angel is often described as someone who helps and rescues people (think of the term "guardian angel"). In the game, Florence can act as an "angel" by healing other team members who have been injured.

Chapter 8

1. Nothing. Leo waits to hear from the coach, but he doesn't get any news.
2. Leo is feeling very down/unhappy.
3. He "just wanted to forget about it" (p. 40). Leo lacks confidence in his ability. He believes that the silence of the coach means he wasn't good enough.
4. Fiks doesn't want to get into trouble with Leo because he knows that Leo isn't happy that people know about his game with Team Odessa. Leo doesn't believe his friend. We know this because

according to the text, Leo knows that "Fiks's 'one or two' was more like nine or ten. No wonder the whole school knew about it" (p. 41).

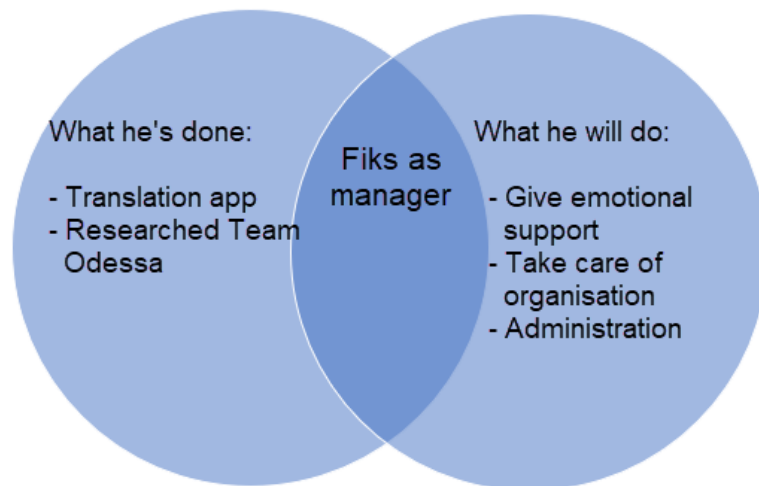
5. Literally, this refers to popping a bubble. The meaning the author intended was the figurative meaning – to pop someone's bubble is to destroy their (often unrealistic) dreams of the future.
6. Student's own answer.
7. In Leo's family, there is not always a lot of communication. For instance, according to page 42, the family often eat meals in silence – Leo's father doesn't make conversation a lot, and Lauren is on her phone the whole time. This might make Leo feel like his family are not that interested in what he has to say, and this might be a reason why he is not so keen to share information with other people – he doesn't think they will be interested.
8. Leo's mom doesn't think gaming is important. For instance, she says, "Is it because of that stupid game of yours?" (p. 42).
9. Leo's dad also doesn't always seem to value gaming although in a previous chapter he appears to be proud of the skills that Leo has learnt from gaming. For instance, in this chapter, Leo's dad realises that he forgot to tell Leo that the Odessa coach wanted to have a video call with them even though Leo has been worrying and waiting for days to hear from him. One message that the author seems to be sending by writing a whole book on gaming and the exciting adventures it brings is that gaming is in fact important and valuable and that adults need to rethink their attitudes towards it. For instance, we already know from Chapter 5 that professional esports players make a lot of money, so gaming can be a career.
10. Who contacts Leo's family? The Ukrainian coach
What does he want? He wants to talk to Leo
When will they talk? That evening
How will they communicate? Video call
11. Student's own answer, e.g., the coach wants to invite Leo to join the team.

Chapter 9

1. The word is placed in italics to show that it is emphasised when Fiks says it. Fiks stresses this word because he cannot believe what he is hearing.
2. Leo is going to Paris with his sister, Lauren.
3. Fiks whistles in order to show his amazement. The author has *shown* us what Fiks feels by describing **what he does**. *Showing* is much more effective than *telling* us what Fiks feels (e.g., "Fiks felt amazed") because we are able to imagine Fiks's reaction so much better.

Showing	Telling
"Fiks whistled" = <i>showing</i> ⇒ encourages us to use our imagination ✓	"Fiks felt amazed" = <i>telling</i> ⇒ doesn't draw us into the story or encourage us to use our imagination ✗

4. Leo is excited. We know this because he "smiled at the thought of the adventure" (p. 45). This is another example of how the author has *shown* the reader how a character is feeling rather than *telling* the reader.
5. What two things are being compared? (1) How Leo feels and (2) something that is hollow. Then, are these two things the same in some way, which would make the metaphor effective? Yes, something that is hollow is **empty inside** and Leo also feels **empty inside**, as though something is missing, when he thinks of going away without his best friend. Because this metaphor helps us imagine Leo's emptiness by comparing two things that have a similarity, it is an effective metaphor.
6. Leo says, "This still doesn't feel real to me" (p. 46).
7. They are talking online. We know this because Fiks is speaking to Leo through headphones.
- 8.



- We can infer that Fiks has probably already had T-shirts, or some sort of clothing, made. We can infer this (work it out) from a couple of clues. Firstly, when Leo speaks, Fiks responds with "a long silence" (p. 48). He also says, "Yeah, about that" (p. 48) and follows these words with an ellipsis (. . .). The ellipsis indicates that words have been left out/left unsaid; presumably the unspoken words were "I already made shirts" or something similar.
- She stands with her feet planted apart, firmly on the ground. Her body is upright. This stance shows that she is confident and in command – she is taking a typical stance of a leader.

Chapter 10

- Maxim, the coach, meets them.
- Lauren goes quiet and stares at Maxim, embarrassed and surprised. Maxim's cheeks turn pink. They have this effect on each other because they are attracted to each other.
- They are staying in the seventh arrondissement, close to the Eiffel Tower.
- Leo rolls his eyes. This shows that he isn't impressed by Lauren's behaviour, probably because she so recently was interested in someone else back home.
- The organisers will limit the characters that can be played to a pre-selected group and will also select the map on which the gamers play.
- Leo doesn't think he has many talents. We know this because he thinks that "he wasn't very good at anything but TOGAH" (p. 54). This is probably an opinion because we know that Leo doesn't have very high self-esteem or self-confidence – he even wondered if his success in TOGAH was just luck.
- His family have made Leo feel that TOGAH, the one thing that gives him some self-confidence in his ability, is "a giant waste of time" (p. 54). This could well have undermined the confidence that TOGAH started to give Leo because his family don't value the game. This may also have made him feel that he wasn't valued by his family either.
- The target audience is children/teenagers because the main character is a thirteen-year-old boy. Young gamers would also enjoy this book because of the focus on TOGAH. However, the way that Leo's family seem to not realise his passion for TOGAH suggests that the audience is also parents. A message that they could draw from the book is that gaming is not just a waste of time and that it is important for parents not to dismiss the pastimes that their children enjoy.

Chapter 11

- It is an old hotel. It is noticeable because it is yellow. It is not as tall as the surrounding buildings, and it is narrow. The building next door is so close that when Leo opens the window, he can touch the bricks of this building.
- It is surprising that the suitcase goes to Lauren as it is Leo who has earned a position in the competition. This suggests that Leo, who is quiet, is sometimes overlooked, perhaps because he is quieter than Lauren, who is "the diva of the family" (p. 55). It is possible that this may have contributed to his lack of confidence.

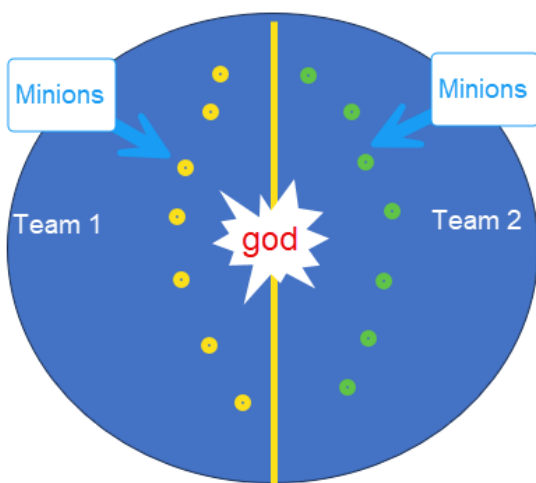
3. Student's own answer, e.g., the cellphone is the most important as up until now, Leo has not had a phone, which he will need not only for the tournament but also in everyday life, in order to keep in contact with his friends more easily.
4. No. Lauren has more power in the relationship. This is clear when Leo says that he will need to keep his phone hidden from Lauren or she will take it and give her old one to him. The fact that he will not stop her from taking a phone that belongs to him suggests that she has more power in the relationship.
- 5.

Name	Description
Vlad	Captain, surly, shaved head, thick eyebrows
Sasha	Energetic, short, red, spiky hair, blue eyes
Oleh	Pale skin, long black hair
Svitlana	Purple and blue hair

6. He was already terrified, and then the other team members weren't very friendly. No one said anything at first when Leo was introduced. Vlad looked surly and said that Leo looked young. Svitlana questions whether Maxim has brought the right person because Leo is so young – she calls him a "baby" (p. 58). Thus, Leo probably found the introduction frightening and difficult.
7. Maxim thinks Lauren is helpful because she has offered to assist with English lessons. Leo thinks Lauren is very selfish and unhelpful and that she wouldn't help someone if their life depended on it. Their views are different because Lauren acts differently with Maxim – she is trying to impress him, which is why she is being helpful.
8. This character is suitable to introduce at this point because the first scene in this chapter ends with Leo feeling terrified at the thought of meeting the team. He has to face his fear when he is introduced to the team, and they do little to take away his fear as they are not friendly. Thus, a key emotion that is experienced in this chapter is fear, which is symbolised by Count Dracul. The info page on Count Dracul also links up with the description of the team captain, Vlad, because Count Dracul's other name is "Vlad the Impaler". The fact that both Vlad the Impaler and Vlad the team captain inspire fear creates a further link between them.

Chapter 12

1. Maxim keeps going out, presumably with Lauren as she goes out at the same time too.
2. Vlad.
3. The point that Vlad is making is that there is no difference between him and Leo. They both started out unknown, as nobodies. This challenges Leo's view that his identity is that of a nobody – Vlad suggests that people can change.
4. The drawing may look something like this:



Vlad's strategy: Look at the characters that the other team choose to figure out their strategy, and then, choose a better strategy and a strong clan of characters.

5. The heart is symbolic of love and romance, so Svitlana clutches her heart to say, in a humorous way, that Maxim and Lauren are in love/on a romantic sightseeing trip.
6. Just as Miyamoto Musashi devotes himself to perfecting his art, so too Leo continues training with Vlad to “perfect his art” even though he would have loved to go sightseeing and eat ice cream. Both characters show great commitment to improving their skills.

Chapter 13

1. Doing drills would mean that the team would go through different scenarios before the competition so that when they face these scenarios in the tournament, they know how to act without wasting time thinking about what to do or wasting time arguing. This will speed up their response time and reduce the chance of mistakes.
2. Simile. Svitlana sat upright and soldiers are very upright when they snap to attention, so the simile is effective. It also continues the use of military images in this chapter as one meaning of the word “drill” is exercises that soldiers do.
3. Oleh says that maybe Leo will be useful after all. We don’t know whether he says this to mock Leo or because he is impressed – or both. We don’t know how Leo is affected, but later in the chapter, Leo thinks how well everything is going, which suggests that he felt positive about answering the question. The fact that he has the courage to answer indicates that his confidence may be growing.
4. The unanswered reply to this question is “No” because what Leo really means when he asks this question is that the trip is going very well/that it couldn’t go better.
5. Maxim shows that the trip can get even better by telling Leo that they are going to Disneyland.
6. The final two words create a sense of anticipation in the reader who will want to read more to find out about Leo’s experiences at Disneyland.

Chapter 14

1. List:
 - The team gets to pose for photos with Mickey Mouse and Captain Hook.
 - The crowd take photos of the team while they are having their photoshoot.
 - People want selfies with Leo.
2. Lauren hurries up in front of the photographer and combs Leo’s hair and tells him to smile. She jabs her fingers into his cheeks for emphasis.

This behaviour shows that Lauren can be selfish as she doesn’t consider that she is embarrassing Leo, who feels stupid. However, it does suggest that Lauren cares about her brother and wants to make him look neat. The fact that she brought a comb with her also suggests that she knows Leo well and took the comb because she knew he wouldn’t brush his hair.

3. The other team members appear confident as they are comfortable posing, placing their hands in the air or crossing their arms to look professional.

On the other hand, Leo doesn’t know where to put his hands or where to look. This shows us that Leo isn’t used to celebrity photoshoots – he is inexperienced. It also shows that he feels awkward and lacks confidence.

4. He knows that his mother loves looking at Disney movies and even his father has a light-hearted side. Leo’s wanting his parents to be there shows his love for his mom and dad and the fact that he knows specific details about them shows that he is observant and caring.
5. “It was **like** being in a movie” (p 71).
6. Being at Disneyland was like a movie because a movie is fiction/not real, and Leo’s experience at Disneyland (the rides, seeing the pink castle etc.) felt unreal too. Leo couldn’t believe he was there. His experience is also like a movie because he gets to meet Mickey Mouse and Captain Hook, both fictional characters from movies.

Chapter 15

1. “Mindfulness” or “focus” sum up the chapter.
2. “He really wanted to keep up – he had to prove to the rest of the team that he belonged there” (p. 73).

3. No. Leo feels he is just a nobody, so he feels the need to prove to himself that he deserves to be there.
4. Student's own answer, e.g., yes, there have been indications until now that Lauren is fairly self-centred. For instance, Leo has to keep his new phone away from her as he knows she will take it otherwise. He also says that "Lauren wouldn't help even if you were being dragged away by a pride of lions" (p. 58).

On the other hand, she might be giving the English lessons to impress Maxim.

5. No. "Leo sat down as instructed, wondering what exactly mindfulness was" (p. 74).
6. Student's own answer. The definition may refer to aspects such as calm/one's mental state and focusing on the present.
7. He is distracted. He can hear people running around and Fiks laughing.
8. TOGAH is his passion – he is good at it. It adds meaning to his life (p. 75).
9. It means a great deal because he doesn't believe he is good at anything else (p. 54).
10. Gaming has planning and psychological components as well. For instance, Leo reflects that "there was so much more to gaming than he'd realised. Strategy, relaxing, breathing" (p. 75). Having good planning/strategy-based skills and being able to maintain calm, mentally, are both very valuable life skills that can help people in many areas of life. The author may be making the point that gaming can give people skills that can help make them more successful in life. In other words, gaming is not just a waste of time.

Chapter 16

1. Lauren agrees "reluctantly" (p. 77) to go out with the boys.
2. Lauren has been spending a lot of time with Maxim, so it is highly likely she wanted to spend the day with him.
3. Leo tries to fit in with what others want to do. Lauren wants to shop, and Fiks wants to see famous landmarks, but Leo says he is just happy walking around the city, which would fit in with what both Fiks and Lauren want.
Leo has also not been relaxing enough – "he never seemed to take time off" (p. 77).
4. List:
 - Arc de Triomphe
 - The Louvre and the *Mona Lisa* painting
 - The bridge full of padlocks.
5. His first impression was that everyone appeared to live in apartments but also seemed to have dogs. His second impression was that the streets smelt of burning tyres.
6. Lauren is selfish – she keeps the boys waiting. She is also self-absorbed and self-centred – she keeps taking selfies.
7. Couples put padlocks on a bridge as a symbol of their love.
8. No. Leo is very awkward when filmed. He gives a blank stare at the camera and mutters "Um, hey, everyone" (p. 79) to the camera.
9. Student's own answer, e.g., Yes, Fiks should have consulted Leo because it is Leo's tournament and esports career journey he is documenting, so how Leo feels about videos of their trip is important.
10. Leo feels overwhelmed because everyone is expecting him to do well, and the hype is also stressing him out.
11. Leo shows some of the signs of imposter syndrome. For instance, he says, "I can't deal with all this expectation" (p. 80), and he tends to doubt himself, e.g., he says he is a nobody and wonders if his achievements are because of luck.

Chapter 17

1. The setting is Vlad's room. The team have put up a large screen and are sitting on whatever they can find, including a suitcase, so that they can watch the first match.
2. The pool of available characters includes very difficult characters: King Shaka, Queen Elizabeth and Buddha.
3. Leo suddenly realises that everyone goes back to level one for the competition, which makes competing much harder. This is evident from the match they watch. Minions cause huge damage to Team Jaguar, and neither clan even gets as far as the god.

Leo is horrified and frightened. The books refers to his "dawning horror" (p. 85) and how he "watched with growing fear" (p. 85).

4. Leo imagines running away to join a circus or hiding in the countryside until it is safe to come out.
Leo's imaginary solutions are unrealistic and very dramatic over-reactions. The overly dramatic response is a reflection of how great Leo's fear is.
5. Leo is frightened of failing – "He knew . . . he was going to fail in front of the whole world" (p. 86)

Chapter 18

1. There is generally a feeling of tension and stress in the compound because everyone feels nervous due to the new rules of the competition and the elimination of Team Xenon, which makes Team Odessa realise that they could be eliminated too. Maxim is experiencing inner conflict because he is stressed and worried about their match – he gets "snappier" (p. 87) the closer the team get to their first match.

Conflict is important as it means that there is some sort of problem that needs to be solved, and readers keep reading because they want to find out if the problem is sorted out. This means that conflict is crucial to keep readers interested.

2. Because Maxim hired a mindfulness coach for the team, one would expect that the coach would help the team members, but ironically, the person who really seems to need a mindfulness coach is Maxim himself.
3. Fiks is much more relaxed than Leo – on the morning of the first match for Team Odessa, Fiks is still asleep in bed. Leo, on the other hand, is stressed and anxious. We know this because he struggled to sleep all night and kept think of nightmarish things that could go wrong, like not having a computer mouse to play with.
4. Leo is struggling. When he sees all the fans and hears them screaming, he finds it "completely overwhelming" (p. 88) and freezes.
5. The mood is tense. We know this because Leo takes gum to calm down, and when Svitlana jokes, no one but Leo laughs. Maxim is pacing, which shows he is anxious.
6. Teamwork is an important element of winning. Maxim tells the team to choose a strong character first, like Shaka, to choose a strategy once the other team select their first character and to stick to the strategy. The team must only focus on **what their teammates are doing and not let their characters die**. This shows that awareness of the other team members is a key part of their plan to win.
7. The drawing shows that Buddha is not fit, so he is unlikely to be a warrior. He carries pages in his hand and a staff, instead of weapons, and he is sitting down rather than standing in readiness for battle.

Chapter 19

1. The lights are too strong. Alliteration (repetition of consonant sounds) of the "b" sound is used to emphasise the brightness of the lights: "**B**linded . . . **b**right".
2. The team sit in the middle of the arena in a glass booth. There is a special gaming computer in their booth, and the booth is soundproof and contains special gaming chairs.
3. Leo is feeling anxious. His trembling hands show he is nervous.
4. King Shaka – Leo is an expert at playing King Shaka.
5. He hears Maxim shout "Yes", which means that Maxim is happy because they have won the toss.
6. The team chooses Shaka as their first character. As a result, they lose the opportunity to choose Vlad's best character, Count Vlad Dracul. This reveals that the team stick to their plans and that they are playing as a team, choosing the characters that they think will be best for the whole team, not just one player.
7. Leo feels that the team lost out the opportunity to choose Count Vlad because they chose Shaka, Leo's best character, so he feels he will be to blame if they lose. Student's own opinion, e.g., Leo will not be to blame because it was a team decision.
8. Leo becomes completely focused on the game. He becomes King Shaka and knows he can cope with the sandy terrain (land) and do well. He "was ready" (p. 96). This shows a valuable aspect of Leo's character – his ability to concentrate and focus once he starts playing.

Chapter 20

1. Team Odessa
2. Fiks only sees the positive – he says that Leo was “incredible” (p. 97). He tells Leo he has never seen his friend move so fast. Leo sees the things that weren’t achieved – he notes that they didn’t get to the god, and he says to Maxim later that he failed because he died; he feels that he disappointed the team because they chose his character first instead of Count Dracul and he let the team down.
3. Leo is finding all the attention and crowds and noise overwhelming. When Fiks leaves him, Leo doesn’t have anyone to ground him, and he just stops and looks around at all the people and experiences all the noise around him. Coach Maxim has to lead Leo away.
4. One of the themes of the book is coping with situations that are different from our expectations. Leo needs to realise he may not always have the chance to play Shaka even though he expected to.
5. He feels that his parents don’t value TOGAH, and he needs to prove to them that he does have talent at something and that the game does have value and that therefore, he has value as a person too.
6. Leo realises that he doesn’t need to prove himself to anyone. As Maxim says, “No one else needs to believe in you. Just you” (p. 99). Leo also realises that he does believe in his ability – he is really good at playing TOGAH. In other words, he is learning to value himself rather than relying on whether he thinks other people value him.
7. He feels a huge sense of relief and joy. We know this because he suddenly feels light-hearted and laughs. He has never felt this happy before.

Chapter 21

1. Team Odessa plays Team Traum and wins.
2. The captain of Team Traum, Angel, is the girlfriend of Oleh.
3. Svitlana sees Angel as a rival, perhaps because she is jealous of her fame. We know this because Svitlana “seemed to be on a personal mission to prove she was better than Angel” (p. 103).
4. Team Traum – the arena is filled with their supporters.
5. He tries to remain confident, both for himself and the rest of the team.
6. He feels scared – his hands are shaking – but it is not as frightening as the first time.
7. First, he realises that he is competing against his hero. Then he thinks that he deserves to be there.
8. He is becoming more confident, he is slowly adjusting to the crowds and fame of playing in the world championship and he is starting to believe in himself.

Chapter 22

1. He doesn’t want them to see that his view is of the building next door, probably because he wants to impress his mom and dad.
2. Mr and Mrs Jantjies say that the previous night’s match was very good, but they are both disappointed when they hear there are still two matches to watch, which suggests that they don’t enjoy looking at the matches as much as they say they do.
3. He is not all that good with technology. When Mr Jantjies starts talking, he shouts, and he is fussing because he says there is an echo on the phone. He also disappears out of view because he doesn’t realise he is no longer in front of the camera.
4. They found that the match Leo played the night before was showing at a time that was rather late for them. Fiks’s videos can be watched any time. They are also much shorter than a match. Mr Jantjies likes seeing what Leo’s experience has been behind the scenes.
5. Mr and Mrs Jantjies try to encourage Leo and say that his match was good and they are looking forward to the final (big match), but they are still obviously not that keen on gaming and don’t value it very highly. For instance, when Mrs Jantjies realises there are two more games still, her smile slips and Mr Jantjies gets grumpy. Mr Jantjies is still very set in his ways. Even though his children are in Paris and he hasn’t seen them for a while, he still ends the call so that he can make tea and watch the news.

6. Student's own answer. It is possible that Lauren is jealous of Leo's success and so is glad when their parents don't seem to have changed their view of Leo's gaming much. What she says isn't accurate because her parents did watch the previous match even though they don't sound very keen about watching many more.
7. Fiks tells Leo not to worry about his parents' lack of eagerness to watch his matches. He says Leo mustn't worry about his parents. Leo's focus needs to remain on the final. Maxim says something similar when he tells Leo, "No one else needs to believe in you. Just you" (p. 99). They are both reminding Leo not to place too much importance on what other people think.
8. Leo doesn't get upset by his parents' lack of interest in the TOGAH competition and decides to shift his focus away from worrying about his parents' opinion to focusing on the opinion of his teammates and making them proud.

Chapter 23

1. The team didn't follow their planned strategy, and Svitlana lost her focus because she had a personal problem with the other team and wanted to prove herself.
2. The figure of speech being used is a metaphor because Maxim is comparing Svitlana to Calamity Jane. The use of this metaphor is effective because Calamity Jane is a cowboy and Svitlana was acting like a cowboy – not following the rules and dashing in impulsively to attack without following strategy.
3. The pizzeria owners give a genuinely warm welcome and are happy to see Leo. The young boy from Team Galaxy is being sarcastic in his friendliness in order to be mean.
4. He says that Maxim's clever plan of using Leo as his secret weapon was not secret at all. Instead it was obvious and showed that Maxim was desperate.
5. Leo doesn't respond because he knows the boy is a bully and that arguing can make the situation worse because bullies want their victims to react. Instead, Leo is polite and says he looks forward to watching Team Galaxy's game the next day.
6. Student's own answer, e.g., yes, because Leo shows he is a better person by refusing to be mean back to the boy.
7. The boy is implying that Leo is not that good because he is saying that Leo can learn from watching Team Galaxy's match.
8. Leo feels less confident and starts questioning and doubting. For instance, he asks himself, "Did Maxim know everyone had seen through his plan? Did he know they were laughing about it behind his back?" (p 113).
9. He wanted to undermine Leo and make him feel embarrassed. This shows us that the boy himself is probably not as confident about his own team as he seems because he has to be mean to others to boost himself.

Chapter 24

1. He is a member of the Australian TOGAH team and the boy who was mean to Leo when Leo went to buy pizza.
- 2.

Characteristic	Example from book
Popular	He has millions of subscribers.
Mean	He puts other players down in his videos.
Arrogant	Fiks says that he "thinks a lot of himself" (p. 114).
Dishonest	His video on Leo isn't accurate.

3. Fiks puts his phone down very quickly so Leo can't see what is on it and pushes his lips together, so Leo can tell his friend is lying.
4. Fiks wants to protect Leo and doesn't want him to get hurt.
5. Paul says Leo is twelve (he is thirteen).
Paul says that Leo's character in the video is trying to avoid fighting.
He edits the video so that viewers can't see that Leo is far away from the fighting because he had been chasing a monster.

6. According to *Cambridge Dictionary* (n.d.), scraping the barrel means “to use the worst people or things because that is all that is available”. What is left at the bottom of a barrel will be of poor quality. Similarly, Paul is suggesting that Leo’s a poor-quality player.
7. Leo was chasing a monster to destroy it in order to win hit points.
8. Paul wants to create a false picture of Leo as useless. Fiks says that Paul is doing this to boost the popularity of his videos - “for entertainment” (p. 116) – and to make himself look better – “to build up his own credibility” (p. 116).
9. He feels as if his brain has been cooked in the microwave. If a functioning brain could be microwaved, it would be destroyed/it wouldn’t work any more. Thus, Leo is saying he feels as though his brain has overheated and is not functioning any more.
10. Leo is very upset. He says, “This is the hardest thing I’ve ever done” (p. 116). His brain doesn’t feel like it is working properly, and he has lost his appetite – he can’t enjoy his pizza.

Chapter 25

1. “Their hope was that Team Galaxy would lose spectacularly, so they could put that whole ugly experience behind them” (p. 118). Leo was very upset when he was bullied by Paul from Team Galaxy, who posted a video suggesting that Leo is no good as a TOGAH player. If Team Galaxy lose, Leo won’t have to have anything more to do with Paul and can forget about the horrible experience he had.
2. The stakes are that whoever wins the match will get into the final. Team Odessa can’t relax as whoever wins this match will play them in the final, so they need to watch how the teams play to learn as much as possible about them.
3. They select King Shaka as their first character.
4. Both Leo and Maxim are shaken/disturbed. Leo is “shocked” (p. 119) and Maxim starts pacing again.
5. He doesn’t want the rest of the team to know he is worried about the gamer playing King Shaka. This may be because he doesn’t want to tell the others about the bullying because it made him feel vulnerable.
6. Maxim says “Mpf”, which indicates he is also watching Pika_2 closely. He is concerned that Team Galaxy picked King Shaka.
7. Leo doesn’t want to watch because it makes him so stressed he can’t bear it. At the same time, he can’t stop watching because the result of the match matters so much to him as it will indicate who Team Odessa are going to play in the finals.
8. When people can’t actually do anything to make something happen, they often still try to control events by superstitious means – for instance, by crossing fingers or by wishing. Leo realises that he has no control over the result of the match – crossing his fingers or wishing won’t make a difference. In other words, he is facing reality and acknowledging what he cannot control.

Chapter 26

1. They are going to have a full media lockdown so that Leo has no access to any content that could distress him. Student’s own answer, e.g., I think it will be effective as Team Galaxy won’t be able to bully Leo if he refuses to access any of their content.
2. Fiks has helped Leo to cope with the bullying, to understand it (Fiks says that Paul is just trying to make himself look better – page 116) and to deal with it (Fiks is going to lock away Leo’s phone). As Leo says, “I think my brain would have exploded by now if you weren’t here” (p. 123).
3. It is easier to cope with bullying when one has the support of someone who cares and looks after you.
4. Leo tries to do what people ask, even if it is inconvenient for him, e.g., Aunt Lolly expects him to buy a list of food for her. Fiks is happy to say no to unreasonable requests – he tells Leo that if he buys the food Aunt Lolly wants, he will have to pay a fine for it at Customs. He finds it easier than Leo to say no, perhaps because he has more confidence.
5. His drawings look a little crazy, and his hair is wild. Sasha tells them that “Maxim . . . is . . . goink . . . nuts” (p. 124).
6. Team Galaxy have studied the plans of Team Odessa.
7. The team are not bothered by the news of the bullying because they are so focused on the game. Leo reacted differently - he was distressed and disturbed.
8. Perhaps. If he had told the team earlier, it might have helped him to put Paul’s behaviour in perspective. It is obvious, from the team’s reaction, that either they are used to other teams

behaving like this or they just don't care – they certainly don't give any sign that they think Paul's video is true.

We don't know why Leo didn't tell anyone, but given his self-doubts in the past, he may have been scared that the team would think Paul was right and that Leo wasn't good enough. Telling the team would have reassured him that they didn't think that way.

Chapter 27

1. Fiks is a very efficient manager.
 - He has confiscated Leo's phone.
 - He has set up WhatsApp groups.
 - He sets up appointments for Leo
 - He passes on messages to Leo
 - By doing these things, he helps Leo to be able to focus on the game.
2. Yes. Maxim tells the team to drink green tea and that they are going jogging. Both these are Lauren's ideas.
3. The word "boring" is repeated three times for emphasis. Alliteration is also used "Bothasig . . . boring." The use of a "b" sound at the start of both "Bothasig" and "boring" connects the two words together, highlighting that Leo thinks home is boring.
4. Leo expected the pro-players to be money focused and materialistic - to have fancy clothes and gaming gear and the "best of everything" (p. 131). In reality, the players have never mentioned prize money and are humble and ordinary.
5. Leo has since realised that he is good at TOGAH and deserves to be in the competition and that only he needs to believe in himself. He now realises that the reality is that there isn't any difference between him and the other team members. He is growing in confidence and realising his worth.

Chapter 28

1. Lauren and Fiks fetch the team coffee and pastries, and Lauren takes the team for a run each day.
2. Student's own answer. It could be either or a combination of motives. For instance, the chapter doesn't contain any suggestion that Lauren is trying to impress Maxim by bringing everyone food/drink and going for runs, but wanting to look good in Maxim's eyes could still have played a role as we know she can be very selfish. She is also very happy – "practically gleaming with happiness" (p. 135), and when people are happy, they often want to make others happy too, so it could be partly that Lauren wants to help the team.
3. Friday is the day of the final.
4. He is **excited** about playing in the final and **happy** that his sister and friend could share his trip with him *but* also **sad** because the trip is almost finished.
5. Maxim is being compared to Prince Charming. Prince Charming is the man who makes Cinderella live happily ever after, and Maxim makes Lauren very happy, so the similarity between Prince Charming and Maxim is the joy they bring. The fact that they both bring happiness means the metaphor is effective. The prince and Maxim are also both attractive, which is another reason the metaphor is effective.
6. He's learnt important lessons, e.g., that money and fame aren't important. What is important is for team members to work with each other to achieve the same goal and to help each other do their best. Leo has also learnt to believe in himself.

Chapter 29

1. Several hints are provided by the way that Leo and Fiks act that they have seen someone/something unexpected. First, Fiks bumps into Leo's back because Leo has suddenly stopped, presumably because he sees Angel. Fiks's words, "Hey, what's happening?" (p. 136) strengthen the impression that something unusual has occurred. Then, the next sentence says that "Leo couldn't move" (p. 136), which makes the reader curious to know why. Fiks looks beyond Leo and gives a gasp, which indicates that he has seen something or someone surprising. Next, Fiks asks an incomplete question, "Is that?" (p. 136), which makes the reader want to find

- out more. Finally, the expectation is fulfilled when the author says that "Angel looked up" (p. 136).
2. They are overawed at the fact that Angel is there with them. According to the text, "Neither of them was used to having breakfast with one of their favourite players in the whole world" (p. 137).
 3. Leo has to face his fear that Team Galaxy might choose his signature character, King Shaka.
 4. Maybe it is not fair although, in terms of the rules of the game, it is allowed. It would certainly be hard on Leo because he has put so much energy into perfecting his ability to play King Shaka. This experience is a life lesson that things don't always go as we expect and plan and that life isn't always fair.
 5. A cyclone is a wind storm that churns up everything around it causing chaos, and Leo's fear and doubt are also churning around inside him causing chaos in his brain, so the metaphor is effective in describing how worked up he feels.
 6. The motive doesn't seem to be strategy because Leo thinks it would be more sensible for Team Galaxy to choose a "stronger, more playable character" (p. 141). Therefore it seems likely, as Leo guesses, that the other team chose Shaka "out of spite" (p. 141) in order to unsettle Team Odessa.
 7. He keeps rocking in his chair, which is a sign of anxiety.
 8. The whole chapter is building up to this high point – this sentence is the climax of the chapter where the other team's choice is finally revealed. The sentence also acts as a cliffhanger as the reader will now be curious to find out what happens next. Does Team Galaxy's choice affect Leo negatively? How does Team Odessa cope?

Chapter 30

1. Leo wants to shout and leap from his chair to show his anger. What he actually does is to stay sitting without moving, his hands holding on tight to the chair. This shows that Leo has control over his emotions. He doesn't want to give Team Galaxy the pleasure of knowing they have unsettled him.
2. This is Vlad's signature character that he is particularly good at playing. If Team Odessa are not going to be able to use King Shaka, Leo's signature character, then they want to make sure that they don't lose the opportunity to secure another character at which a team member is an expert.
3. Leo's confidence is knocked, and he feels "empty" (p. 143). His whole purpose in coming to the tournament was to play King Shaka. Now that he can't do that, he thinks he isn't more skilled than anyone else.
4. Yes. As Maxim says, "They took a risk, thinkink it vould put us off our game, givink them a greater advantage" (p. 144).
5. Leo's legs feel like jelly - they feel weak because he is shocked at the news that Team Galaxy have selected King Shaka. This figure of speech is a simile because it is a comparison using the word "like". Jelly is wobbly, and Leo's legs also feel wobbly. By imagining Leo's legs as jelly, we can imagine just how weak and vulnerable he feels, so this is an effective figure of speech.
6. They don't want the cameras to pick up on their facial expressions, which might give Team Galaxy a clue about what they are discussing and how they feel.
7. He says that they always knew that Team Galaxy might select Shaka. Team Odessa will be okay because they have been training hard and have a plan. The fact that Team Odessa play better together as a team is a more important factor in their success than the individual ability of one player (e.g., Leo) to play one character (e.g., King Shaka).
8. No, not at all. He says, "You are one of the best players in the world, Leo, and ve need you" (p. 144).
9. Even after the shock of losing King Shaka and having all his expectations overthrown, Leo is still determined to play and do his best. He says, "Ja, I can do it" (p. 144).

Chapter 31

1. Their left hands are hovering over their keyboards, and their right hands are holding their mouse sets.

2. Hades. They realise they are wrong when Cerberus, the three-headed dog associated with Hades, doesn't appear, but a Sphinx does, which changes into a serpent. Shapeshifting monsters (monsters that change their form/shape) are found in Loki's kingdom.
3. The team work together with different characters fulfilling different roles. Those characters on horses round up the skeletons and kill them and the other characters, Vlad Dracul, Queen Elizabeth and Miyamoto Musashi, are able to get past and go forward.
4. The skeletons are destroyed and the other characters get to the Sphinx, which changes into a serpent, and then finally Team Odessa reach the god.
5. King Shaka. This suggests that their strategy was not successful.
6. They laugh and shout and then surround Leo and carry him out into the arena. The fact that they celebrate together, as a group, suggests that they are committed to each other as a team and know that it is in working together that they are most successful.

Chapter 32

1. Leo is quieter and more introverted – he wants to be alone while packing his luggage. Fiks is much more outgoing and wilder – he has been partying all night.
2. Leo helped Team Odessa to win the championship.
3. Maxim's words are ironic because he seems to mean them figuratively – in other words, when he says "No, it is I who owe you. You have no idea how much", Leo thinks that Maxim is just saying thank you to him for helping the team to win. In fact, though, Maxim's words have a double meaning – Leo literally has no idea how much money Maxim owes him and only discovers later when he opens the envelope.
4. He wants Leo to become a permanent member of Team Odessa.
5. Maxim is going to talk to Leo's parents about his offer in person, but the real reason he is coming to Cape Town is that Lauren has asked Maxim to be her boyfriend, and he is coming to visit her.
6. At first, Paris seemed strange compared to Cape Town, but now Leo feels at home (i.e., content/a sense of belonging) in Paris because he has been accepted by the members of Team Odessa and made to feel he belongs. All the excitement and adventure Leo has experienced in Paris have also made him see Paris as special.
7. Just as Leo sees Paris differently and is content in Paris, so too Leo sees himself differently and is content with who he is:
 - He sees himself as someone who is very good at TOGAH and who deserves his place on the Odessa Team.
 - He now believes in himself and knows his value rather than needing someone else to believe in him.

Study guide glossary

Alliteration: Repeating the same consonant sound at the start of a word, e.g., “Bothisig . . . boring”.

Characters: These are the people in the story, e.g., Leo, Fiks and Lauren.

Climax: The climax is the most dramatic/exciting part of a story.

Conflict: Conflict is tension or arguing. There are two kinds of conflict: internal conflict and external conflict. See “external conflict” and “internal conflict” for explanations of these terms.

Connotation: The connotation of a word is the emotions, feelings and associations connected to a word.

Denotative: The denotation or denotative meaning of a word is its literal meaning.

External conflict: This is conflict (arguing/tension) between people.

Falling action: The falling action happens after the climax. The conflict is usually sorted out, and the story is brought to an end.

Figurative meaning: This refers not to the literal meaning (the actual meaning) of something but to another meaning. For instance, the figurative meaning of “I’m cool” is “I’m popular”. The literal (actual) meaning of “I’m cool” is “I’m not warm”.

Figuratively: See “figurative meaning” above.

Fragment: An incomplete sentence that doesn’t contain a main clause, which consists of a subject and verb.

Genre: This is the type of story which has been written, such as an adventure story/contemporary realistic fiction.

Hyperbole: exaggeration.

Internal conflict: This is conflict (arguing/tension) within a person.

Irony: This refers to a situation which is funny or entertaining because it has an unexpected twist/the opposite happens to what one would expect. For instance, a vegetarian running a hamburger business would be an example of irony because vegetarians do not eat meat – this is not a situation one would expect.

Literal meaning: This refers to the actual meaning of something. For instance, “I’m cool” means “I’m not warm”. Compare this to figurative meaning above.

Literally: See “literal meaning” above.

Metaphor: A metaphor is a comparison that doesn’t use the words “like” or “as”, e.g., “that beautiful girl is a morning rose.” Here, the girl is being compared to a rose (they are both very pretty), but the words “like” and “as” are not used.

Narrator: the person telling the story.

Onomatopoeia: This refers to a word that sounds like its meaning, e.g., in the sentence “the bees buzz”, the word “buzz” sounds like the noise made by a bee.

Paraphrase: To paraphrase something means to write it in your own words.

Plot: The plot is the related events that together form a story.

Protagonist: The protagonist is the main character in the story.

Rising action is the build-up towards the most exciting part of the story.

Setting: The setting is where and when the story takes place. This story takes place in Bothasig and Paris.

Simile: A simile compares two things using the word "like" or "as", e.g., she is as pretty as a rose.

Subject: The person or thing doing the verb in a sentence, e.g., *The man* **[subject]** writes **[verb]** the letter.

Theme: The theme of a story is the message behind a story.

Tone: The tone refers to the feelings/emotions created by the book.

Verb: The verb is the doing word/the action in a sentence, e.g., The bird **[subject]** flew **[verb]** into the sky.

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