

The Westing Game
Comprehension Guide

Chapter 1

1. Why was the delivery boy described as uncommon?
2. What was unusual about Barney Northrup?
3. What did Barney say that caused Jake to wonder?
4. Where did Sydelle Pulaski direct a suspicious stare?
5. How did Barney finally convince Sydelle to take the apartment?
6. How was Barney a good salesman?
7. Who will be the new tenants in Sunset Towers?

Chapter 2

1. How did Mr. Hoo feel about the grand opening of his restaurant?
2. Who was Sandy McSouthers?
3. What surprised Turtle Wexler about the Westing House?
4. Describe Otis Amber.
5. What did Chris notice as he was looking through the binoculars?

Chapter 3

1. Why did Angela Wexler utter a small cry?
2. How is Mrs. Wexler's relationship with her daughters?
3. Describe J.J. Ford.
4. According to Chris, what special talent did his brother Theo possess?
5. What was in the long package that Sydelle Pulaski carried into her apartment?

Chapter 4

1. Why was Doug Hoo stationed outside the Westing House?
2. Why did Turtle have her mother's silver cross in her pocket?
3. What did Turtle encounter when entering the house?
4. Why did Turtle take a billiard club upstairs?
5. Sam's obituary mentioned that he was a dedicated gamesman and master of chess. Why might this be significant?
6. Why were 16 people asked to go to the south library of the Westing mansion?

Chapter 5

1. Who greeted the beneficiaries at the Westing House?
2. Why was Turtle startled when she looked in the coffin?
3. What was Denton Deere's diagnosis of Chris?
4. Why was Judge Ford surprised to see E.J. Plum in charge of the Westing Estate?
5. What did the design on Sydelle's dress remind Turtle of, right at that moment?

Chapter 6

1. When the will was first read, why are those who are present shocked to hear the words, “my nieces and nephews”?
2. What is the second important piece of information that is revealed during the reading of the will?
3. What must the potential beneficiaries do if they wish to “strike it rich”?
4. Explain Mr. Hoo’s comment, “the poor are crazy, the rich are just eccentric.”

Chapter 7

1. What was the object of the game?
2. Why was Chris happy to be selected to play the game?
3. Why does Bertha Erica Crow shriek?
4. Why was Sandy so insistent that his partner Judge Ford play the game?

Chapter 8

1. What did the tenants at Sunset Towers awaken to the next morning?
2. How was Turtle able to profit from the storm?
3. What are many of the heirs apparently doing on this particular day?
4. What does J.J. Ford hope to do just once?
5. Why is Sydelle Pulaski upset when she discovers that her shorthand notebook is missing?

Chapter 9

1. Why is ‘Lost and Found’ an appropriate name for this chapter?
2. What did someone find on the third floor balcony?
3. What happened at J.J. Ford’s apartment that evening?
4. What did Turtle predict that the next part of the will would read?
5. Why did Turtle think her mother was treating her so nicely now?
6. Give examples of how Grace dislikes Turtle and favors her other daughter.
7. What information did J.J. Ford uncover that indicates James Hoo would not have liked Sam Westing?

Chapter 10

1. What is a social climber?
2. Why was Grace Windsor Wexler on time for Judge Ford’s apartment that evening?
3. Why did Angela become upset when everyone continually asked about Denton?
4. Why was Chris watching legs from his wheelchair?
5. Why is Sydelle disappointed that Angela changed her clothes?
6. Why did Angela rush into Judge Ford’s kitchen?

Chapter 11

1. What dilemma did the tenants face as they woke on the third snobound morning?
2. Why did Turtle have to ask Flora Baumbach to braid her hair?
3. How does the reader know that Turtle didn't like her hair?
4. Who is Rosalie? What kind of person is she? What happened to her?
5. What did Chris suddenly realize as he read the note on the elevator wall?
6. Who found Sydelle's notebook and where did they find it?
7. Why could no one read Sydelle's shorthand?
8. What does Judge Ford suggest to the tenants who have gathered in the coffee shop?
9. What confusion arises about Turtle's real name? Explain a possible reason for this.
10. What question did Judge Ford write on the paper? Was it a good question?

Chapter 12

1. Describe the incident in the kitchen.
2. What does Turtle demand that Angela immediately return to her?
3. According to Judge Ford, who are the four people with the Westing connections?
4. Why did Judge Ford's finger suddenly stop at the top of the list of detectives in the yellow pages?
5. In the end of this chapter, Judge Ford summarizes some of the heirs' connections to Sam Westing. Recap the information that the judge has collected. Add any additional clues that YOU know.

Chapter 13

1. What kind of timing device did the bomb use?
2. Who were the only people to order down?
3. Who is Mrs. Baumbach reminded of when she sees Angela?
4. According to Sydelle, why is Chris's disability an advantage?
5. What happened just as Otis Amber entered the restaurant?
6. According to the fireman, why was it not unusual to have had two explosions within one day in the same building?
7. Where was the bomber planning to set the next bomb?
8. Angela and Theo end up having a meal together at Mr. Hoo's restaurant. Both seem very unsure of themselves. Discuss the clues that the author gives about their personalities.

Chapter 14

1. Why did Angela search under the hoods of the cars in the parking lot?
2. Why did the doorman refuse to accept a tip from the Judge?
3. Why was Alexander McSouthers fired from his job at the Westing factory?
4. Why did Alexander McSouthers suffer from bad headaches?
5. What voices did Grace hear coming from the kitchen?
6. Why did Grace open the window despite the cold draft?
7. Why were the tenants purchasing so many Westing Paper products?
8. Dr. Denton Deere claims that Sydelle Pulaski, his fiance's partner, is crazy. The psychiatrist says that she is not. What has Sydelle done to raise this concern?

Chapter 15

1. What does Turtle mean by the expression, "Paper losses... doesn't mean a thing"?
2. Why were Turtle and Sandy dubious about the "murder" of Samuel Westing?
3. Why did Doug suspect that the murder may have been a doctor?
4. Shin Hoo told Jake Wexler that he thought he could squeeze him in at the restaurant. Explain why this statement is ironic.
5. Why is Judge Ford surprised at McSouther's description of Mrs. Westing?
6. Flora, Judge Ford, and Sandy notice a remarkable resemblance between Angela Wexler and what other person?
7. The title of this chapter is "Fact and Gossip." Do you think it contains more facts or gossip? Give examples of facts or gossip that was discussed to support your claim.

Chapter 16

1. Describe what event is occurring at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What does Angela do as she opens the gift wrapped in gold foil?
3. Describe Angela's injuries.
4. Why did Otis Amber think that he should not be considered a suspect in the incident?
5. Who does Sydelle think the bomber is?
6. Who do you think the bomber is? Explain your choice.
7. Throughout chapter 16, Ellen Raskin uses many sets of parentheses. Why do you think she decided to write this way? What do parentheses help Raskin to tell us?

Chapter 17

1. What indication is there that the heirs were jittery?
2. What were the two trading terms that Flora Baumbach had learned?
3. After reexamining their clues, whom do Grace and Mr. Hoo think is involved in the mystery?
4. What is Mr. Hoo's latest invention?
5. What does Theo discover when he analyzes his clue?
6. Why does Theo think that he must be dreaming?
7. Sandy McSouther's is doing some investigating for Judge Ford. In Chapter 17, he reads to her the research he has collected about James Shin Hoo. After reading Sandy's notes, why might Mr. Hoo be a suspect?

Chapter 18

1. Why does Turtle think that it would be a good idea to call Flora Baumbach by another name?
2. What did Turtle like about the way "Baba" did her hair? How did she feel when "Baba" spoke about Rosalie?
3. Who was Rosalie and how did she die?
4. How is ammonium nitrate used?
5. What assignment does Theo give to Doug Hoo?
6. What letter does Otis Amber deliver to Doug?
7. What help does Denton hold out for Chris?

8. How does Chris feel at the prospect of being taken hostage by Doctor Deere?
9. Why was Mrs. Baumbach excited about WPP?
10. Why was Chris excited to discover that Denton Deere limped? What caused the limp?
11. Throughout the story, Flora Baumbach has mentioned her daughter, Rosalie. In Chapter 18, she mentions Rosalie's love of color and that "her daughter might have been an artist if things had turned out differently." Look back at other mentions on pages 75, 89, and 123 and create a description of Rosalie and why Flora thought she was so special.

Chapter 19

1. How did Turtle defend the use of the radio in school?
2. Who does Otis Amber accuse of being responsible for the bombings?
3. To whom is Crow referring when she uses the term "foot butcherer"?
4. How does Chris presume the blank envelope ended up in his bathrobe?
5. How does Judge Ford react when told by Sandy that Jake Wexler is a bookie?
6. How did the doorman react to what Judge Ford said?
7. At the very beginning of the book, the author mentions "A Mistake." The mistake is revealed in Chapter 19. What was it? Explain in detail.

Chapter 20

1. What was the price of WPP at two o'clock?
2. Why didn't Doug's feet hurt anymore?
3. Why was Theo in the hospital?
4. Why did George Theodorakis falter while telling the story of Violet Westing?
5. Judge Ford and Sandy McSouthers come to a conclusion regarding who the suspect is, and therefore, who is in trouble. They even mention a name, but it has no connection to the heirs/players of the Westing Game. Who do you believe they are worried about? Why?

Chapter 21

1. What does Theo want to borrow from Turtle?
2. What is Judge Ford's connection with the Westing family?
3. Why does Judge Ford think that Sam Westing paid for her education?
4. What was on the reverse side of the bomber's note?
5. What does Turtle confess to the judge?
6. Why does Sydelle Pulaski throw her crutches into the air?
7. Who was injured by the fourth bomb?
8. What did Angela and Sydelle conclude from their clues?

Chapter 22

1. Briefly describe the note passed in the elevator?
2. Where would one find the story of Cain and Abel?
3. What is the significance of Turtle's comment that her mother would be upset if she knew who the real bomber was?
4. Which of the heirs does Judge Ford think may be Sam Westing's former wife?
5. Who does Judge Ford think was actually in the coffin?

6. Why would it be difficult to recognize Sam Westing now?

Chapter 23

1. What did Otis mean by the phrase, "The turtle's lost its tail"?
2. What did Turtle convince Angela not to do?
3. What did the heirs receive in their envelopes?
4. Who did Denton Deere suggest could use plastic surgery?
5. Chapter 23 leads us through the heirs' guesses about who the murderer is. Some of the teams give very strange answers. For example, can "BOOM!" or "Mr. Westing is a good man" be a logical answer to the question? Who do you believe has the best answer? Explain your choice using evidence from the story.

Chapter 24

1. Since they can no longer work as partners, what does Theo suggest the heirs do?
2. What was Denton Deere's diagnosis when Mr. Hoo claimed that the tea might be poisoned?
3. Which heir does Judge Ford believe is actually Sam Westing?
4. Using the clues provided, who does Sydelle Pulaski announce as the murderer?
5. What happens to Sandy toward the end of this chapter?
6. Do you think that Berthe Erica Crow is telling the truth? Explain your answer.
7. Judge Ford comes to some very important decisions regarding Sandy McSouthers and Berthe Erica Crow. Why is she suddenly afraid OF Sandy and afraid FOR Crow?

Chapter 25

1. What does Denton Deere accuse Turtle of doing?
2. How does Turtle respond to his accusation?
3. What according to Judge Ford is the famous Westing trap?
4. Why does Judge Ford repeatedly call herself stupid?
5. Turtle's kicking skills and Theo's chess skills get mixed up in the investigation of the Game. Summarize what the characters have discovered and what it might mean to finding the murderer and/or the "winner".

Chapter 26

1. Who is the young lawyer in Judge Ford's court?
2. Why is everyone surprised when Otis Amber testifies?
3. Who hired Otis Amber?
4. What is a coronary thrombosis in layman's terms?
5. What did Sandy's flask contain according to Turtle?
6. Judge Ford believed that Sam Westing had assumed two disguises. Identify his two disguises.
7. Turtle discovers that the secret to the inheritance may lie in the clue that Sam Westing had four identities. She mentions (1) Sam Westing, and (2) Sandy McSouthers. Have you figured out his third and/or fourth name? If you have figured it out, what clues led

you to this conclusion? If you are still “in the dark,” what additional information would help you?