The Chrysalids
Chapter Questions

Reading 1

Ch. 1: The Dream and the Definition
Vocab: germinate, dungarees, cleft, rote

1. What suggestions and hints are given that David’s world is an unusual world?
2. Despite what he has been taught, David feels no particular revulsion towards Sophie. Why?

Ch. 2: “Watch thou for the mutant”
Vocab:

3. What physical evidence is there in Waknuk of an earlier civilization?
4. a) In Waknuk, what is the difference between an “offence” and a “blasphemy”?
   b) What is the term applied to both kinds?
5. Who are the “Fringes” people?

Reading 2

Ch. 3: The Purification—A Dream
Vocab: omission, monotonous, incredulous, pulpit

1. Why does David’s comment regarding the bandaging of his finger cause such a reaction in the family?
2. What is revealed about David’s state of mind as a result of his recent experiences?
3. What is the meaning or significance of David’s dream of the Purification?

Ch. 4: The Group
Vocab: dissemble, rectitude, pedant

4. What is the promise the David makes to Uncle Axel, and why is Axel so serious about it?
5. a) What is Angus Morton’s opinion of Joseph Strorm?
   b) What is Joseph’s opinion of Angus?

Reading 3

Ch. 5: Discovery and Flight
Vocab: heresy, malicious (malice), obliterate, dubious, inferiority

1. What is the mark or measure of a good season among the Waknuk farmers? (something unique to David’s world)
2. What does Alan Ervin discover?
3. Why do the Wenders decline to take David with them?
4. The character of David’s father is further revealed to us through his actions and words. What are those actions and words, and what do they tell us about his character?

Ch. 6: A Geography Lesson from Uncle Axel
Vocab: See Ch. 5 vocab.

5. Why does David ask Axel what the world outside Labrador is like? What brings him to this curiosity?
6. Axel mentions “Marther’s Report.” Why did the report get Marther in trouble?
7. Describe some of the deviations Axel says exist in the lands to the south.
8. In what way is Axel attempting to “educate” David?

Reading 4

Ch. 7: A Baby and a “False Image”

1. Why is Petra’s birth not announced immediately?
2. a) What does Harriet ask of Mrs. Strorm, and why?
   b) What is Mrs. Strorm’s reaction?
3. a) Examine Joseph’s “sermon” (p. 74). Select all the negative words and expressions. To whom are these applied? Select any positive words or expressions. To whom are these applied?
   b) What does this tell us about his character?
Ch. 8: A Rusted Mirror—Axel has Doubts

4. Why might David’s prayer seem ironic to us?
5. Axel calls “Tribulation” a “rusted mirror.” Examine the context of this metaphor and explain what he means.
6. What development arouses our interest at the end of this chapter?

Reading 5

Ch. 9: Old Jacob’s Views and a Problem

1. Who is the new member of “the group”? How is she different from the other members?
2. What danger to David and Rosalind does the incident with Petra present?
3. Briefly summarize Jacob’s views. How are they different from Joseph’s or Axel’s?
4. As predicted, another “tribulated season” occurs. Why does this make “the group” particularly uneasy?
5. What kinds of problems could Anne’s marriage present?

Ch. 10: Love, Marriage, Murder, Suicide

6. a) What are two objections “the group” presents to Anne regarding her marriage plans?
   b) What arguments does Anne make in response to their objections?
7. What is Rachel’s gruesome discovery? What else does she find in Anne’s room?
8. Was Alan’s death an accident? Explain your position.

Reading 6

Ch. 11: The Education of Petra

1. Describe the effect that Petra’s distress signal has upon communications within “the group.”
2. How does Petra’s dangerous incident create danger for the rest of the group?
3. Why is the character of Skinner important?
4. Why does Axel warn David?
5. a) Who, apparently, is the source of the present suspicions and rumours about the group?
   b) What does the group decide to do?
6. How does the author maintain suspense at the end of this chapter?

Ch. 12a (to P. 128): The Flight to the Fringes

7. What dramatic news interrupts Michael’s sleep?
8. Which members have been captured at this point?
9. How does Rosalind attempt to conceal the trail of their flight?

Reading 7

Ch. 12b: The Flight to the Fringes

1. How are Michael and Mark going to keep the fugitives informed regarding the pursuit?
2. a) According to Michael, why were the people of Waknuk so upset about the group?
   b) As a result, what course of action have the townspeople proclaimed?
3. What interrupts Michael’s thought conversation with Petra?
4. Why is the description of “Zealand” especially significant to David?

Ch. 13: Message from Sealand

5. What is the most important point of the message from Sealand?
6. Does David’s explanation to Petra of the treatment they would receive from their pursuers resemble attitudes that exist in today’s world? If so, how?
7. What information do we know about the Sealanders at this point?

Reading 8

Ch. 14: The Spider-Man

1. Summarize the Fringe man’s philosophy (the man who captured the fugitives).
2. Why does the voice from Sealand call her people the “New People”?
3. According to the Seander, what was one of the chief defects of the Old People? Why was that defect disastrous to them?
4. What do David and the spider-man have in common?
Ch. 15: Sophie

5. For what possible purpose does the author reintroduce Sophie at this time?
6. What has been Michael’s purpose during the pursuit into the Fringes?
7. How has Sophie changed over the years?

Reading 9

Ch. 16: “A Place Among the Fossils”

1. What is the reason for the conflict between Sophie and Rosalind?
2. a. What are some of the details that the Sealand woman observes as she passes over our continent?
   b. What is the cause of these details?
   c. What comments does she make that further suggest the landscape’s origin?
3. a. What terrible conflict does David face as the pursuers approach?
   b. Who resolves it and with what reasoning?
4. What does the Sealander mean by “… a place among the fossils …”? Who? Why? (P. 182)
5. Briefly describe the Sealander’s method of stopping the battle.

Ch. 17: A Brave New World

6. Why did Michael choose to be the one to go on to Waknuk for Rachel? (Connects to a major theme in the story)

7. The Sealand woman says her people “are beginning to understand how to assemble and apply the composite team-mind to a problem.” She wonders where they may take humanity in the future. Discuss some possible answers, both positive and negative.

8. “The essential quality of living is change; change is evolution; and we are part of it” (P. 196).
   If, as she suggests, the “stationary” or “static” is the enemy, does this mean we are held back by traditions and moral laws? Is stability really stagnation? Explain.

   (Stagnation: remaining in one place; not moving)