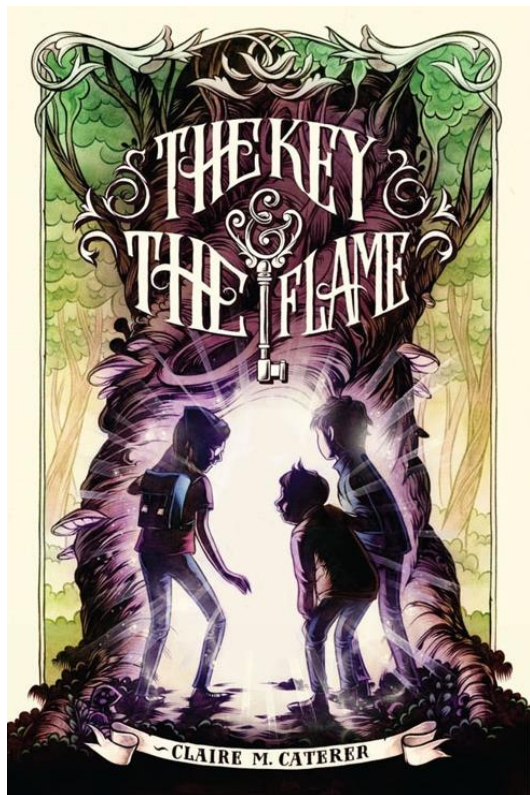


# The Key & The Flame Teaching Guide



## About the Book

Eleven-year-old Holly Shepard wants nothing more than to seek adventure outside of her humdrum American life. She gets her chance at last when her family travels to England and Holly she receives an unusual gift: an iron key that unlocks a passage to the dangerous kingdom of Anglielle, where magic is outlawed and those who practice magic are hunted. When her friend Everett and brother Ben are captured by Anglielle's ruthless king, Holly must rescue them. But that means finding—and using—the magic within herself and learning which magical allies she can trust. *The Key & the Flame* is the first in a brand-new five-part fantasy adventure series.

**Ages:** 9–14

**Grades:** 3–8

**Publisher:** Margaret K. McElderry / Simon & Schuster

## About the Author

Claire M. Caterer was born in Detroit, Michigan, and raised in the suburbs of Kansas City. A writer from the age of five, Claire has published fiction in *Woman's World* as well as in *Ellery Queen* and *Alfred Hitchcock* mystery magazines. After some years working in New York publishing, she returned to the Kansas City area, where she lives and writes full time. The sequel to *The Key & the Flame* is called *The Wand & the Sea*, available June 23, 2015. Claire is available to visit schools as well as book clubs, scout troops, or other small groups to lead book discussions and writing workshops. Please contact her at [claire@cmcaterer.com](mailto:claire@cmcaterer.com) for fees and availability. She also loves to talk to readers via email, Twitter, or Facebook. See [www.cmcaterer.com](http://www.cmcaterer.com) for contact information.

## About the Teaching Guide

*The Key & the Flame* combines a rousing adventure with a magical journey. Here I offer some discussion questions and activities to expand your enjoyment of the book with your students. A full table of contents is on page 2.

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St. Edward's parish church, Stow-on-the-Wold, UK  
photo courtesy of [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk)

## Reading & Discussion Questions

1. Why does Holly feel like such an outsider in her own school? What makes her different from the other kids?
2. What do you think Holly has in mind when she says she wants to have an adventure? Have you ever had an experience that you consider an adventure, even if it wasn't magical?
3. How are Holly and Ben different? How are they alike? Does having Everett as their friend change their relationship?
4. Why do you think Everett steals a key from Mr. Gallaway? Does he think it's okay to do so, and if he does, why does he lie about it?
5. Fire and heat are mentioned in several different ways in the story. Name some of them.
6. Loverian, the king's knight, believes in honor. How is he honorable? Why does he stay loyal to such a ruthless king?
7. Jade says to the Wandwright, "To invade an Adept's mind is to steal her power." What does that mean? Is that true only of Adepts, or of ordinary people too?
8. Why does Everett make the agreement with Sol? Was it right of him to do so? Why or why not?
9. Do you think Prince Avery really wanted to travel to our world? Why would he want to escape the castle, where he has everything he could possibly want?
10. How does Holly change from the beginning of the story to the end? What about Ben and Everett? Do any of the characters stay the same?

# A Classification Activity

In *The Key & the Flame*, elements as defined by classicists like Aristotle and the ancient Celts are an important feature. The Wandwright helps Holly forge her wand by using representatives of the four elements—fire, water, earth, and air.

Have students create a collage of the four elements. Start by taking a large piece of construction paper or posterboard and dividing it into four sections. Then have them search magazines, newspapers, or online for images that represent the elements. Some ideas:

## **FIRE**

flames  
the sun  
a stovetop or oven  
summertime  
furnace  
chimneys  
sparks  
volcanoes  
stars  
dragons

## **WATER**

rivers  
lakes  
the ocean  
ships and boats  
water sports  
rain and snow  
icicles  
streams and creeks  
faucets  
swimming pools, sprinklers

## **EARTH**

the planet  
soil  
gardening  
tunnels  
caves  
stones & minerals  
plants & trees  
forests  
mountains  
earthquakes

## **AIR**

windmills  
tornadoes / storms  
flags  
weathervane  
clouds  
bubbles  
aircraft  
balloons  
smoke  
books (study/intellect represented by air)

On the next page is a Find the Elements Word Search. Students will need to find words in the puzzle that correspond to the four elements, and classify them. They are:

**Fire:** FLAME, HEAT, SIZZLE

**Water:** OCEAN, RAIN, STREAM

**Earth:** SOIL, STONE, TREE

**Air:** BLOWING, CLOUD, WIND

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Find the Elements Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Which ones correspond to Fire, Water, Earth, and Air?

BLOWING  
CLOUD  
FLAME  
HEAT

OCEAN  
RAIN  
SIZZLE  
SOIL

STONE  
STREAM  
TREE  
WIND

I N P Y D D Q G O E E N R W C  
W I N D S L N N C X N E G G L  
L G N D Q I C F E T D O R S O  
I Z V D W L Y T A Y O G T T U  
O D I O C X N E N P K L P S D  
S G L B P V L Z O A M E D G S  
D B Q F V R G V A A K J R Y Q  
C M E L Z Z I S E Z L J R B H  
P T N A D F Z R H O A A C A O  
W O A O D D T F E K I Q O G R  
C V Z G E S Z L A N O M T E N  
E D V M L F X D T R D R L H E  
B W A L M B N X K T G Q L B G  
B L A A M E S E M A U D N R V  
F K X A Q U O C Q L V Q C V O

# Writing & Art Activity

1. Begin by brainstorming with students on the board. What words can be associated with each element? Think of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The ideas below will get you started.
2. Have students choose an element and write a short story or scene that somehow incorporates that element. Students can illustrate the story as well, or simply write a sentence that describes their picture. They should try to use as many words that correspond to their element as possible.

## Fire Words



Nouns: flame, lava, sun, summer, campfire, pepper, candle, fire truck  
Verbs: sizzle, burn, explode, blast, melt, steam, cook, glow, shine  
Adjectives: hot, dry, baked, crackled, burned, charred, spicy

## Water Words



Nouns: stream, ocean, rain, fountain, waterfall, mist, bucket, bathtub, well, ship  
Verbs: gurgle, ripple, slurp, drip, pour, dribble, snow, run, rush  
Adjectives: wet, cold, drippy, soaked, drenched, clear, foggy

## Earth Words



Nouns: soil, tunnel, cave, subway, rock, leaves, diamond, tree, roots  
Verbs: dig, burrow, grow, reach, scurry, hide, wait, hush,  
Adjectives: dark, dirty, calm, green, fertile, quiet, warm, snug

## Air Words



Nouns: wind, cloud, storm, gale, balloon, breeze, books, mind, goose bump  
Verbs: blow, think, whisk, tumble, read, shiver, rise, propel, travel, fly  
Adjectives: soft, warm, chilly, gentle, penetrating, dizzy, high, adventurous

If students have read the book, they may wonder about the fifth element mentioned, **aether**. It's not included here because it is the invisible, spiritual force binding the rest together and doesn't lend itself as easily as the others to these activities. But if students wish to explore it, the results could be very interesting!

# Social Studies Activity: Life in a Medieval Castle



Part of the story of *The Key & the Flame* takes place in the king's castle, where Ben and Everett are held prisoner. Have students research a particular aspect of medieval castle life and report on it to the class. Depending on grade level, the report could be written and include several sources or just an illustration and brief description.

Some ideas for topics:

**Feasting in the Castle**—what did lords and ladies eat? How was the food prepared? Who cooked it, and how many people dined at a time?

**Defending the Castle**—How did the castle garrison keep the castle safe? What happened to the lord or king when the castle was under attack? What weapons were used?

**The Role of Women**—Ladies didn't just do needlework. They ran the castle when the lord was away, which was frequently. What was their role and how was it carried out?

**Daily Life**—Where and how did people sleep? Did they take baths often or seldom? How did they spend their time?

**Fun & Games**—Did kids have toys, and what kind were they? What sort of music was played? What happened at jousting tournaments, and who participated?

**Medieval Clothing**—Did kings walk around with crowns on their heads? What did their clothes look like? How did the servants, peasants, or merchants dress?

**The Castle Knights**—How did a boy become a knight? What was a squire, and what was his job? Were there rules about who could become knights and who couldn't?

## RESOURCES

Your school library will have books on this topic with call numbers in the 940-942 range. Here are some to get you started:

CASTLE by Christopher Gravett (DK Eyewitness Books, 2008)

A YEAR IN A CASTLE: AS TIME GOES BY by Rachel Coombs (First Avenue, 2009)

A MEDIEVAL FEAST by Alike (HarperCollins, 1986)

MEDIEVAL LIFE by Andrew Langley (DK Eyewitness Books, 2004)

GOOD MASTERS! SWEET LADIES! VOICES FROM A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE by Laura Amy Schlitz  
(Candlewick, 2008)  
LIFE ON A MEDIEVAL MANOR by Marc Cels (Crabtree, 2004)