

Book Club and Reader's Guide for



ROME REFRAMED

By Amy Bearce

About the book

Lucas Duran has been on the trip of a lifetime—six months traveling through Europe with his parents and two younger brothers. That is, the trip of a lifetime for someone else. Lucas wants nothing more than to be home in Austin, Texas, with his friends, and it shows in his schoolwork that he's been emailing to his teachers. He can't wait to get out of Rome, the last stop on their trip.

When his teachers give him an ultimatum—either turn in a phenomenal last project or you'll fail the eighth grade—Lucas is going to have to decide whether to give up or to give in to the mystery of Rome. And after a cryptic palm reader hands him a weird-looking coin to throw in the Trevi Fountain, Lucas finds himself transported to ancient Rome at each new tourist destination. As his hops back through time become more personal, it seems the magic of Rome is determined to help Lucas gain more than an A+ project, too. Can he fix his future before his time in the past is over?

Two Options:

- *Book Discussion Questions:* These are big, broad questions that work best after the complete book has been read. These questions can be adapted for book clubs, reading journals, reading workshop class, library groups, or more.
- *Chapter Comprehension Questions:* For those reading the book chapter by chapter with a class.

Also included:

Vocabulary suggestions, 10 essay and project ideas, book recommendations



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Book Discussion Questions:

1. Describe Lucas at the beginning of the novel. Does he remind you of anyone you know? If so, how?
2. How does Lucas's relationship with Vivi affect the story?
3. Compare/contrast Lucas and Vivi. How does their relationship change throughout the book?
4. What does David bring to the story? What is his role in the conflict and rising stakes?
5. How does the setting influence the story?
6. Lucas uses humor to lighten the tension in his life. Find an example in the text that brought a lightening of the mood or a moment of humor.
7. What is a theme of the novel? What in the story supports this theme?
8. When Lucas travels back in time, what seems to trigger those occasions for him and what brings him back?
9. What is revealed about each of the different historical time periods and characters in the story, through Lucas's point of view?
10. How would this book be different if written from another character's point of view, like Vivi's?
11. The working title for this book was *When in Rome*. It became *Rome Reframed* prior to publication. Think of another alternative title for the book. What made you choose it?

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GRADE 6 (used as example—can be adapted to fit other grades' standards) Common Core State Standards – Reading Standards for Literature For Texas teachers, the TEKS are listed below, in summary form for grade 6.	Book Discussion Questions 1-11
Key Ideas and Details	
RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	1, 11, 8
RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	6, 7
RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	2, 3, 4
Craft and Structure	
RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.	6
RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.	5, 7
RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.	10
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	
RL.6.7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch	Audio and video of <i>Paris on Repeat</i> is not currently available.
RL.6.8 Not applicable to literature.	n/a
RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.	9
Range and Level of Text Complexity	
RL.6.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	Applicable through reading this novel.

TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills): Grade 6 as example. These questions cover:

110.22 (b)(3) Vocabulary

110.22 (b)(5) Comprehension: purpose, prediction, , make connections, inference, details, synthesis

110.22 (b)(6)(A-I) Response: connections, summarize, new vocab, write about meaning of text, reflect

110.22 (b)(8)(A) Analyze elements of literary genres (contemporary touches of magic vs. fairy tales)

110.22 (b)(9)(A-F) Author's purpose and craft: message, text structure, figurative language, pov, mood

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Chapter Comprehension Questions

*Individual questions are not categorized into curriculum standards, due to space limitations.

Chapter 1:

1. What does Lucas want at the start of the story and how do we know that?
2. On page 2, Lucas refers to his “European fine art collection.” What do we learn about Lucas from this collection?
3. What one word best describes Lucas’s relationship with school?
4. What purpose does the prologue serve in this story?
5. What is the tradition surrounding the Trevi Fountain?

Chapter 2

1. Vivi likes to see Lucas’s pictures. Why?
2. What does Vivi suggest about Lucas’s photographs?
3. On page 20, Lucas says, “A guy’s gotta work with what he’s got.” What does that mean?
4. Describe Lucas’s relationship with his brothers and his parents, based on the text.
5. When Kei does not call as expected, what does Lucas tell himself?

Chapter 3

1. The chapter titles provide a snapshot of the chapter. What other chapter titles would work for this chapter, and why?
2. How does Lucas’s journal entry compare to his experiences of the day that we, the readers, have witnessed?
3. Why does Lucas feel upset after the call with Kei?
4. Lucas concludes that he and Vivi are friends. What supports his conclusion?
5. What do you predict will happen next, based on his teacher’s email?

Chapter 4

1. What are the requirements of Lucas’s assignment?
2. On page 40, Lucas says:

“Jeez, was this the best I could do? Trevor could do better than this at six. And of course, my parents literally taught people who were already super smart. Who knew how I ended up in this family?”

What do readers learn about Lucas from this text?

3. The palm reader tells Lucas he has an artist’s heart, the soul of a poet, and that he hides it. What message does she give to Lucas about the coin and Rome?
4. How do Lucas’s parents respond to his request to see the Colosseum with Vivi?
5. How does Vivi surprise Lucas?

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Chapter 5

1. What does Lucas's perspective of Austin have in common with how Vivi thinks of Rome?
2. "Chills coated me like snow." What figurative language is used here to show her feelings?
3. Describe the Colosseum, based on Lucas's experience.
4. What picture does Lucas take that he is proud of?
5. What is your prediction about what happened with the coin?

Chapter 6

1. What role does the palm reader serve in the story?
2. On page 66, the palm reader tells Lucas, "Well. Mother Rome has many reasons for many things. Let's just say your need for information dovetails nicely with her own plans to answer your wish." What do you think that means for Lucas in this story?
3. Give an example of a sensory descriptions used while Lucas is back in ancient Rome. Why are sensory descriptions so important for this particular scene?
4. Lucas writes an entry about the Colosseum. What kind of information does he include?
5. What discovery is made at the Colosseum that leads Lucas and Vivi to their next destination?

Chapter 7

1. During the visit to Trattoria Russo, what do Lucas and Vivi learn about the palm reader?
2. What does Lucas try for the first time?
3. Describe Lucas's poem about the appetizer for their meal.
4. What do Signora Russo and Lucas have in common besides the magical coin?
5. How does Lucas feel about his family?

Chapter 8

1. Vivi and Lucas discuss their past experiences and get to know each other a little more. How do their lives compare and contrast, including the expectations others have of them?
2. On page 92, Lucas says, "Thinking about home didn't sting like it used to. What did that mean? Was it bad?" What can we conclude about Lucas from this reaction?
3. Robby and Trever join Lucas and Vivi for the afternoon. How does Lucas respond at first and then after remembering the conversation with Signora Russo?
4. Do you predict the trips through time will continue? Why or why not?

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Chapter 9

1. On page 101, Lucas describes being jealous of Robby for just a moment. Why?
2. How does the Sistine Chapel change from the present time to when Lucas jumps back in time?
3. On page 106, what does Michelangelo mean by his statement, “Art requires courage.” How does courage interact with art, based on his story?
4. What clue leads them to the Pantheon as their next destination?
5. How is this journal writing experience different for Lucas? Use the text to support your answer.

Chapter 10

1. The chapter title is, “The Pantheon’s Surprise.” What is the Pantheon’s surprise?
2. On page 113, Lucas compares the domes of St. Peter’s Basilica and the Pantheon. How do they compare and contrast?
3. What does Lucas try to convince Vivi of?
4. When do Vivi and Lucas travel in time? What is the significance of the date?
5. On page 122, Vivi and Lucas have this exchange:

I said, “That lighting effect . . . it makes the outside match the inside so much more. The outside cleans up really nice.”

Vivi’s brows drew to a V. “The outside already looks amazing, even in our time! Those tall columns are all one piece, you know! They were shipped by river from Egypt!”

I pursed my lips. “But the outside looks like plain concrete compared to all that fancy space inside.”

She scoffed. “It only looks plain to those who don’t understand it.”

This discussion has another, deeper layer of meaning if you think of Lucas as being like the Pantheon. What does this conversation mean within that symbolism?

Chapter 11

1. How does Lucas’s attitude about his abilities change in this chapter compared to previous chapters?
2. What realization does Lucas have about his parents?
3. What is the role of Kei in this chapter?
4. Lucas has visions of eating alone at the lunch tables next year, if he has to attend summer school and miss the chance to be on the soccer team. What does he conclude from the conversation?
5. What does Kei assume about Lucas and Vivi? How does Lucas respond?

Chapter 12

1. How is Lucas’s journal entry about the Pantheon different from his past entries?
2. What is the theme of his poem “Inside/Outside”?
3. On page 138, Robby tells Lucas to stop putting himself down. What causes him to say this?

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4. What does the palm reader mean when she says, “Vivi, show him *your* Rome.”
5. On page 147, Lucas says, “I didn’t need a photograph to capture this moment forever.” What does that mean? Did you expect Lucas to have this reaction to the garden with Vivi?

Chapter 13

1. Why does Lucas feel irritated with David? What does he realize about himself?
2. Why does Lucas see this realization as a problem?
3. Why is the bookstore special to Vivi?
4. Provide one description of the bookstore from the text. Now write a similar line about a favorite place for you, using one of your five senses.
5. What is significant about this trip back in time? What does Lucas do for the first time?

Chapter 14

1. When Lucas sees the guitarist, he takes a photo, and looks forward to writing a poem about it. What is his response to this feeling?
2. On page 163, why does Lucas encourage Vivi to sing with the guitarist?
3. When Vivi hears that her father used to write poetry, what is her reaction?
4. When Lucas tells Vivi about his negative experiences in school, what does her response show about her character?
5. What pact do they make together? What does Lucas do to try to support Vivi as a singer?

Chapter 15

How does Lucas shift his perspective in the piazza?

What triggers the coin for this time travel trip and the others, overall?

What is unexpected Vivi about this trip?

Lucas overhears his parents talk about his potential. He hates that word. What does Vivi say that makes him think that it might be time for a change?

How has Lucas changed throughout the story? What does he realize about himself?

Chapter 16

1. Lucas reflects on the various pictures he’s taken. What do they have in common?
2. This is Lucas’s last night in Rome. What does he need to accomplish?
3. What happens when he calls Kei?
4. On page 190, the text states, “That new open space inside me collapsed into a cold, hard knot. If I were the Pantheon, the dome just fell in.” What does this mean?
5. What does Lucas realize at the end of the chapter?



Chapter 17

1. Lucas tells his family he's afraid of failing. How does their response help him?
2. What is the meaning or theme of his poem, "City Bones"? How was his entry brave like Michelangelo?
3. Why was Kei mean in their last phone call? What does he convince Lucas to do?
4. Lucas writes an apology letter to both Vivi and to her father. What does he say to her father to try to help Vivi?
5. Lucas's mother is confused when he says he wants to be an artist but has a knowing smile when he says he's going upstairs to clear something up. What can we conclude about his mother and her relationship with her son?

Chapter 18

1. Does Mr. Bonacelli's response surprise you? Why or why not?
2. On page 218, the text says: "I brought you a letter," I said stupidly, holding it out like a cat tossing a dead bird at its owner's feet." How is Lucas feeling at this moment, based on the text?
3. What does Vivi give to Lucas? Why is this significant?
4. How has Vivi and her father reached a new understanding? What began that conversation?
5. What does Lucas's mother do for Lucas?

Chapter 19

1. What is the last chance that the chapter title is referring to?
2. How do Lucas's parents begin to see him in a new way?
3. Lucas says, "Best. Morning. Ever." What made it so special?
4. What messages does his mother give him that mirrors what Michelangelo said?
5. Lucas finally tells Vivi he likes her. Is her response what you expected? Why or why not?

Chapter 20

1. What time travel trip has Lucas taken now?
2. What role does Lucas get to play in his mother's past?
3. Why does he tell his mother that she would return to Rome?
4. On page 242, Lucas says, "After all, they say home is where the heart is, and part of my heart would always be in Rome. What does this mean for Lucas?"
5. What does the last entry for Lucas reveal about his past and his future?

Note: The Note to the Reader explains what parts of the story are real and which are fictionalized.

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Vocabulary

RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Pick 1 or 2 of the following activities.

1. Find each vocabulary word above in the sentence in the listed chapter. Write your own definition based on the context of the word. Then look up the word and see how close you came to figuring out the correct definition.
2. Use these ten words in sentences of your own.
3. Find two more words you were uncertain of in the story, from any point in the book. Write what you think they mean. Then look them up and confirm.

nomadic—chapter 1, p. 11

uncouth—chapter 2, p. 21

amphitheater—chapter 3, p. 30

unique—chapter 4, p. 38

mocked—chapter 5, p. 57

surreal—chapter 6, p. 65

corsage—chapter 7, p. 80

clamored—chapter 8, p. 96

adapt—chapter 9, p. 105

mischievously—chapter 10, p. 115

badgering—chapter 11, p. 129

conspiratorial—chapter 12, p. 139

scorned—chapter 13, p. 157

sauntered—chapter 14, p. 163

authentic—chapter 15, p. 173

intentionally—chapter 16, p. 184

insistence—chapter 17, p. 207

vaporized—chapter 18, p. 216

exasperated—chapter 19, p. 238

nestled—chapter 20, p. 241

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Essays and projects:

1. Imagine you are making a movie of *Rome Reframed*. What would be the hardest part of making the movie?
2. If you were to create a map of Rome based on this story, what are three places that would be on the map and why? Bonus: Draw a map of Rome.
3. Write a character sketch of one of the characters in the book. Bonus: Draw an image of the character.
4. If you had to pick one character from the book to see Rome with, who would you pick and why? Make a class graph to see which character wins the “Best Travel Companion” award.
5. Imagine you are a reporter for a newspaper and you can interview Hadrian, Emperor of Rome. Write an article about what happened during his reign.
6. As a craft, make a Roman gladiator shield from cardboard. Paint it with a family crest, with a symbol for your family. OR: Recreate a scene from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, with pencil or paint.
7. Do a research project on a famous tourist destination in Rome. Explain the history of the place and why people still visit today.
8. Using a web 2.0 tool such as Popplet, Padlet, or Bubbl.us, make a plot diagram, showing the main plot points of the story. Be sure to include the inciting incident, rising action, climax, and resolution.
9. Make a book trailer for the book and publish it online. (Then please make sure to tag Amy Bearce and Jolly Fish Press so they can celebrate and share your talented work!)
10. Try an Italian feast, pot-luck style! Enjoy pasta, pizza, cannoli, risotto, bruschetta, gelato, and fried artichoke hearts.

About the Author

Amy writes magical escapes for young readers and the young at heart. She is the author of the World of Aluvia series, *Shortcuts*, and *Paris on Repeat*. She is also a former reading teacher and school librarian. As a military kid, she moved eight times before she was eighteen, so she feels especially fortunate to be married to her high school sweetheart. Together they’re raising two daughters in San Antonio. You can learn more about her books at www.amybearce.com

