

Discussion & Writing Activities

1. Leif does not enjoy the same activities as his family.

Individual Writing Activity:

Think about the activities that YOU enjoy. Write a paragraph explaining whether you share the same interests (soccer, baking, karate, reading, etc.) as your family or whether you have different interests. What about your friends? Do you share more interests with your friends than with your family, or do you have different interests from your friends?

Group Discussion Activity:

As a class, or in small groups, talk about the activities that you like to do in your free time. Do you do the same activities as your families? Your friends? Have you ever decided to do an activity just because your friend was doing it (like joining the same soccer team or taking the same gymnastics or chess class)? Did you end up enjoying it? Did someone in your family ever insist that you do an activity you didn't want to do? Did you end up liking the activity after all?



2. Leif's favorite activity is hiking.

- By yourself or with a group, research famous hikes in three different countries. Examples might include hiking the Appalachian Trail in the United States, hiking Mount Everest in Nepal, or hiking along the Great Wall of China. Which of the three hikes you researched would you most want to try? Why? How long do you think it would take? What equipment would you need?
- Draw a picture of you doing your favorite activity.

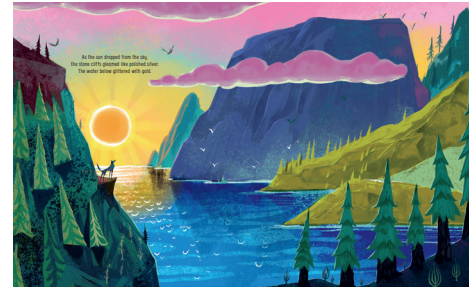
3. This story is fiction (it did not really happen), but the Vikings were a real group of people who lived hundreds of years ago.

- By yourself or with a group, research the Vikings. What are they best known for? Would you have wanted to be a Viking? Why or why not?
- Look up where the Vikings lived, and where they explored. Find those places on a map or a globe.



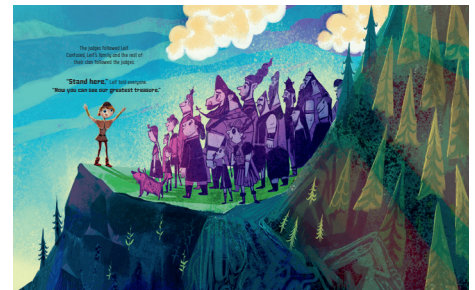
4. The author chose the name Leif for the main character of this book for two reasons. The first reason is that there was a famous real-life Viking explorer named Leif (Leif Erikson). The second reason is that the name Leif sounds similar to the word “leaf,” and Leif the character loves spending time in nature, surrounded by leaves.

- Write a paragraph about your own name. You can ask your family members how your name was chosen, or you can look up the traditional meaning of your name. You can write about what your name means to you, or you can write about whether you like your name or not (and why). If you have a nickname that people call you, you can write about that too!
- Write a short story about one main character. Then explain how/why you chose your main character’s name.



5. During the Viking Games, the two tribes must show the judges their greatest treasures. Most of the Vikings bring gold and silver treasures, like jewelry or shields, to show the judges. But Leif shows them a different kind of treasure—the natural beauty of the fjords that he loves.

- Draw a picture of your greatest treasure. It can be an object, like a special necklace that your grandmother gave you. It can be a person. It can be a place. It can be an idea or a skill—it can be whatever is a “treasure” to you!
- After you finish your drawing, either write about why this is your chosen treasure or present your drawing to your class and explain why this is your greatest treasure.

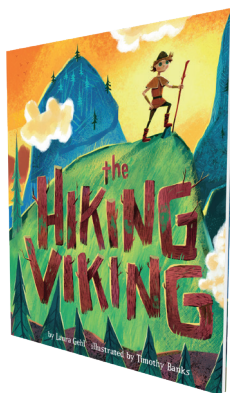


6. The illustrations in this book show the natural beauty of the fjords in Norway, where Leif lives.

- Where is the most beautiful place you have ever been? Draw a picture. It can be a beautiful natural place, like a forest, or it can also be a museum or a room in your home. Pick any place that is beautiful to you!
- Where is a beautiful place you would like to visit one day (real or imaginary)? Draw a picture and talk about it.

About the Book

While the other Vikings love to holler and howl and battle and brawl, Leif prefers spending time by himself atop the beautiful fjord. But when it’s time for the Viking Games, everyone must participate. Will Leif let down his clan . . . or surprise them? Highlighting the value of nature and earthly wonders, best-selling author Laura Gehl teams up with illustrator Timothy Banks to remind readers to stay true to themselves and to look at things from a new perspective.



About the Author

Laura Gehl is the award-winning author of numerous picture books, including *One Big Pair of Underwear* (Charlotte Zolotow Highly Commended Title, International Literacy Association Honor Book, Booklist Books for Youth Editors’ Choice); the *Peep and Egg* series (Parents’ Choice Recommendation, Amazon Editors’ Pick, Children’s Choice Book Award Finalist); and *I Got a Chicken for my Birthday* (Kirkus Best Picture Books selection). Laura lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with her husband and four children.

About the Illustrator

Timothy Banks is an award-winning illustrator from Charleston, South Carolina. He’s created character designs for Nike, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network; quirky covers for *Paste magazine*; and lots of children’s books with titles like *A Valentine for Frankenstein*, *Nian*, *The Chinese New Year Dragon*, and *There’s a Norseman in My Classroom*. Timothy also loves to hike and find inspiring scenery along with his talented wife and three energetic daughters.

