

An Educator's Guide for

The 13th Sign

By Kristin O'Donnell Tubb



The activities in this guide align with
Common Core Standards and fit into the curriculum for Grades 4 - 8

Dear Educator,

The 13th Sign is a modern-day interpretation of the Twelve Labors of Hercules, and is about the “missing” 13th sign of the zodiac calendar, Ophiuchus. It is my hope that this guide will help you incorporate a reader-friendly fantasy story into your class curriculum. Each of the

selected classroom activities is aligned with the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts for grades 4-8. Thank you!

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FROM THE BOOK

Come to think of it, I don't know that there is such a thing as a *good* trait or a *bad* trait. Every aspect of our personality can be good or bad; it just depends on the situation. Sometimes a help, sometimes a hindrance. No absolutes.

About *The 13th Sign*

What if there was a 13th zodiac sign?

You're no longer Sagittarius, but Ophiuchus, the healer, the 13th sign.

Your personality has changed. So has your mom's and your best friend's.

What about the rest of the world?

What if *you* were the one who accidentally unlocked the 13th sign, causing this world-altering change, and infuriating the other 12 signs?

Jalen did it, and now she must use every ounce of her strength and cunning to send the signs back where they belong. Lives, including her own, depend upon it.

Praise for *The 13th Sign*

"An original, action-packed plot, a resilient heroine, a twist ending, and 12 sly, angry Keepers will hold readers on edge. The ultimate astrological fantasy." – *Kirkus*

"The swiftly paced plot will please readers used to *Hunger Games*-style action." – *Booklist*

"An engaging, fast-paced adventure through both the streets of New Orleans and the astrological map of the sky." – *BCCB*

"Tubb's adventure is pulse-pounding...it's refreshing to have a heroine who doesn't happen to have superpowers or ninja training." – *Publisher's Weekly*

Suggested Activities

1. Introduce the idea that different societies have used different types of calendars over thousands of years, and the zodiac is one of those.

- Have students read about different types of calendars:
<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2013/02/the-13th-sign-the-history-of-the-zodiac>
- Ask students to develop a “new” calendar based on something that interests them: sports seasons, for example, or when plants bloom.

*Correlates to the Common Core Standards
RH 6.3, 7.3, 8.3*

2. Introduce the idea of a “retelling” of a story. In this instance, *The 13th Sign* is a retelling of The Twelve Labors Of Hercules.

- Have students retell one of their favorite classic fairy tales with modern-day elements.
- Publish these retellings in a blog or book.

*Correlates to the Common Core Standards
W 4.5, 4.6, 5.5, 5.6, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 7.3, 7.6,
7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6 RI 7.9*

3. As students read *The 13th Sign*, ask them to list unfamiliar words and note the page number where each word is found.

- In small groups, read aloud the paragraphs containing the words and try to determine the meaning of the word from the context.
- Use the dictionary to clarify the precise meaning
- Use a thesaurus to find a synonym and antonym for each word.

*Correlates to the Common Core Standards
RL 4.4, 5.4, 6.4; L 4.4, 5.4, 6.4 7.4, 8.4; RF
4.4, 5.4; L 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4*

4. Ask students to pick one of their favorite scenes from *The 13th Sign* and draw a cartoon/graphic novel/comic book of it.

*Correlates to the Common Core Standards
SL 4.5, 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5*

5. Have students look up their own zodiac signs, then write their own horoscopes using action verbs and descriptive words.

*Correlates to the Common Core Standards
W 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3*

6. Have students look up their own zodiac sign. Ask them to write a sample interaction (with dialogue and narrative) between themselves and a personified version of this sign.

Correlates to the Common Core Standards
W 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3

7. In small groups, discuss the theme of personality/changes in personality. Make a list of the kinds of everyday things that might change if you had a different personality (i.e., handwriting).

Corresponds to the Common Core Standards
W 4.2, 5.2; SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1; SL 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4; RL 6.2, 7.2, 8.2; RI 4.2, 5.2

8. Have students look up their own zodiac sign. Ask them to write a short story from their sign's Point Of View. (This could be the character in *The 13th Sign* or an entirely new character.)

Corresponds to the Common Core Standards
RL 4.6, 5.6, 6.6, 7.6, 8.6; W 4.1, 5.1; W 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3; W 4.7, 5.7, 6.7, 7.7, 8.7; L 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2

9. Compare and contrast the 12 Labors of Hercules to Jalen's 12 challenges in *The 13th Sign*.

Correlates to the Common Core Standards
RL 4.9, 5.9, 6.9, 7.9, 8.9; W 6.2, 7.2, 8.2

10. Read your horoscope nightly for a week. Keep a journal on whether or not those predictions came true and how you interpreted them.

Correlates to the Common Core Standards
W 4.10, 5.10, 6.10, 7.10, 8.10; W 4.7, 5.7, 6.7, 7.7, 8.7

11. Write an alternative ending to *The 13th Sign*. In small groups, share your new version of the story.

Correlates to the Common Core Standards
W 4.3, 4.4, 5.3, 5.4, 6.3, 6.4, SL 4.4, 5.4, 6.4

FROM THE BOOK

Something was odd about this chart, aside from the fact that it had literally appeared from mist....This zodiac chart had thirteen signs. Thirteen, not twelve. I counted twice to make sure.

Author Q&A

How did you get the idea for *The 13th Sign*?

I love space, so after I finished writing *Selling Hope*, I knew I wanted to write another celestial book. When I thought about what interested me about space when I was a middle-schooler, I automatically thought of horoscopes. Once I did a little digging and discovered there is a “Missing” 13th sign of the zodiac, I knew it was a story I wanted to tell.

What kinds of research did you do for *The 13th Sign*?

All kinds of things! Everything from the zodiac calendar to horoscope signs to personality types and personality changes to New Orleans to piloting a hot air balloon to how to catch a catfish without a hook.

How long did it take you to write *The 13th Sign*?

Two years – and it's my fastest book yet!

What's your sign?

I'm an Aquarius under a 12-sign calendar. A Capricorn if you include the 13th Sign. (See more on that below!)

What other books have you written?

Selling Hope and *Autumn Winifred Oliver Does Things Different*, along with a bunch of other stories I hope will become books someday!

Other Fun Things

A fun thing for all readers! Discover your 12-sign horoscope, your 13-sign horoscope, and which horoscope sign you *act* like by taking *The 13th Sign* online quiz.

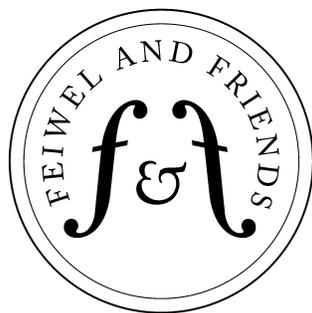
<http://13thsignquiz.com>

Skype & Author Visits

When I was in sixth grade at City Park Elementary School in Athens, TN, I got to interview my favorite author by telephone – Madeleine L’Engle! (Thank you to my librarian, Ms. Shelia Rollins, for that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!) When I told Ms. L’Engle I wanted to be a writer, she said, “Good for you! Keep reading and you can do it!” So I try my hardest to pay that sentiment forward at every school I visit.

I love visiting schools and doing FREE Skype visits. If you’d like to book a visit for your students, please visit my website: www.kristintubb.com and/or email me: ktubb@comcast.net. I request an honorarium of \$350/hour (I’ve found an hourly rate works well with most schools’ tight schedules.) I can discount that rate IF you make my books available for sale prior to the event. And please let me know if you need ideas on how to make an author visit affordable/effective!

At your school, there is a young reader who wants to write. I hope I have the opportunity to tell that young reader that he or she can do it, too.



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