

Vocabulary

1. **luminous** (lūō mē nəs) *adj.* glowing; brilliant (page 7)
 2. **inanimate** (in an' ə mit) *adj.* lifeless (page 11)
 3. **vertices** (vər' tē sēz) *n.* more than one vertex; more than one point that marks the intersection between two or more lines (page 13)
 4. **manifest** (man' ə fest) *adj.* easily understood or recognized (page 14)
 5. **irrepressible** (ir' ri pres' ə bəl) *adj.* impossible to repress or restrain (page 16)
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6. **cognizance** (käg' nē zəns) *n.* awareness (page 25)
 7. **static** (stat' ik) *adj.* not moving; showing little change (page 32)
 8. **kinetic** (ki net' ik) *adj.* moving (page 32)
 9. **irregularity** (ir reg' yōō lar' ə tē) *n.* state of being irregular; geometric state of not having equal sides and angles (page 35)
 10. **deviation** (dē' vē ā' shən) *adj.* departure from the norm (page 37)
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11. **superfluous** (sə pūr' flōō əs) *adj.* unnecessary; beyond what is needed (page 43)
 12. **sedition** (si dish' ən) *n.* resistance to lawful authority; revolution (page 49)
 13. **configuration** (kən fig' yōō rā' shən) *n.* shape; arrangement of parts or elements (page 56)
 14. **dominions** (də min' yənz) *n.* regions ruled or controlled (page 66)
 15. **multitudinous** (mul' tē tōōd' 'n əs) *adj.* including a great many individuals; populous (page 76)
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16. **infinitesimal** (in' fin i tes' i məl) *adj.* immeasurably small (page 84)
 17. **conjecture** (kən jek' chər) *n.* supposition; guess (page 94)
 18. **palpable** (pal' pə bəl) *adj.* able to be touched or felt (page 97)
 19. **succinct** (suk sɪŋkt') *adj.* stated briefly and precisely (page 100)
 20. **lucid** (lōō sid) *adj.* clear; easily understood (page 100)

Chapters 1–4 (pages 7–22)

Discussion Questions

1. How does the image of a penny on a table help readers visualize Flatland?
2. Why is it difficult for Flatlanders to determine which way is North? How do they compensate for this difficulty?

3. How do the shapes of Flatland's inhabitants reflect their social status?
4. Flatland's citizens can recognize another person's status immediately by his or her shape. Compare this with the ways people in our society recognize others' status.
5. How do you think the opening chapters of the novel would have been different if they had been told by someone other than a first-person narrator?

Writing Activity Write a one- or two-paragraph description of the land and the people of Flatland for someone who has not read the book.

Chapters 5–8 (pages 23–42)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is recognizing another person by sight a difficult task in Flatland?
2. Describe three methods that an inhabitant of Flatland can use to recognize another inhabitant.
3. What is “the art of painting” in Flatland? What practices in our society have a similar effect?
4. Do you think the narrator of *Flatland* is reliable or unreliable? Why?
5. Do you think Abbott created *Flatland* in order to satirize modern society or to model a utopian world? Explain your answer.

Writing Activity Write a paragraph or two explaining why it might be difficult to turn the novel *Flatland* into an animated film. Use details from the novel to support your explanation.

Chapters 9–12 (pages 43–61)

Discussion Questions

1. How does the Universal Colour Bill affect life in Flatland?
2. How is “Chromatic Sedition” finally suppressed? What kinds of real-world events does this episode satirize?
3. What tone of voice would you use if you were acting the part of the narrator? How does the narrator's tone affect the satire of the novel?

- How does the Flatland view of Irregularities in configuration relate to the question of whether nature or nurture has a greater influence on character development? How are Irregulars treated in Flatland society?

Writing Activity Write two paragraphs explaining why conformity is equated with morality in Flatland. Then, tell what Abbott is satirizing with this equation.

Chapters 13–15 (pages 65–80)

Discussion Questions

- How are Flatland and Lineland similar? How are they different?
- How does the character of the King of Lineland enhance Abbott's fantasy? Is he a realistic or an exaggerated character?
- Why does the narrator have difficulty explaining the two-dimensional world of Flatland to the King of Lineland?
- Why do you think Abbott introduces Lineland to the reader before the visitor from Spaceland arrives?

Writing Activity Write a paragraph that describes what you predict will happen when the narrator receives a visitor from three-dimensional Spaceland.

Chapters 16–18 (pages 81–106)

Discussion Questions

- What does the narrator see when the Sphere enters and leaves Flatland?
- How does the Sphere finally help the narrator understand the nature of Spaceland and three dimensions?
- What does the meeting between the Sphere and the narrator suggest about Abbott's purpose for writing this novel?
- How does the character of the narrator change after he visits Spaceland?

Writing Activity Well-developed characters who have many realistic characteristics are sometimes called "three-dimensional." Would you use that word to describe the narrator of *Flatland* even though he literally has only two dimensions? Write your response in one or two paragraphs.

Chapters 19–22 (pages 107–118)

Discussion Questions

- Why does the narrator decide that his grandson would be most likely to understand about his visit to Spaceland?
- How do the inhabitants of Flatland respond to the narrator's tales?
- What is the tone of the narrator's final remarks? How does this tone affect the novel's conclusion?
- What theme about imagination and knowledge does Abbott's fantasy explore?

Writing Activity Write two or three paragraphs that show what might have happened in an alternative ending to *Flatland*.

Pulling It All Together

Writing Write an essay in which you describe how *Flatland* combines two subjects that are not usually related: literature and mathematics. Discuss how these elements work together to emphasize and illustrate the novel's central theme.

Dramatic Monologue Have students take the part of the narrator and present a dramatic monologue describing the visit to Spaceland for an audience of Flatland inhabitants. Encourage students to use sketches to help make points clear. Ask audience members to listen carefully for inconsistencies in point of view.