**“Speed Dating” Questions on Chapters 1-6 in Lost in Lexicon**

Questions for Chapters 1-6. With the person across from you, discuss the question that you’re on for one full minute. Then, for another full minute, write down as many ideas as you can about the question. You do not need to write in full sentences, just take bullet-pointed notes that will jump-start our whole-group discussion afterward.

1. In the article from *e! Science News*, “No Gender Differences in Math Performance” (<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2008/07/24/study.no.gender.differences.math.performance>) the author states that researchers found “little difference” in terms of “how well boys and girls did on complex problem solving” in standardized tests. The author goes on to state that what the researchers did find “was a disturbing lack of questions that tested this ability.”

How does this discovery speak to Mary Ann’s assertion that “math is memorizing” and that “it’s all about who can memorize the most formula and numbers” (72)? Agree or disagree with her statement, using a real-world anecdote (story from your own experience) that could support your opinion.

1. As Mary Ann explains to the cousins, the number villages “used to trade with the word towns a lot, but now folks mostly keep to themselves” (55). In spite of the division between these two parts of Lexicon, how are the word and number villages actually quite similar? In other words, what conflicts do they share? What is similar about their response to these conflicts?
2. When the cousins are in Radix, they meet Jack, who tells them that his village “used to have the liveliest of cultural exchange and trade” but that “all that has declined since the ‘change in the weather’ people talk about” (44). When the cousins question his use of quotation marks around ‘change in the weather,’ he explains that he is color-blind and that this different way of seeing actually allows him to see that the children’s disappearance is “not just [because of] the weather” (44). He never gets to fully explain this to the cousins because he is drowned out by a crowd of people admiring the “shimmering points of colored light” in the sky (45). What do you think Jack means? What do you think is causing the children’s disappearance?
3. In Radix, the cousins are given a compass but not the directions for how to use it. What other “things” are they are given over the course of (or even at the beginning) of their journey that they are unsure how to “use” but have to figure out as they go along? So what? In other words, how are these things helping both Ivan and Daphne to grow and change? Give some specific examples.
4. We have already discussed the definition of conflict and people have investigated various forms of conflict that come up throughout the first six chapters of *Lost in Lexicon*. What are the top two conflicts as you see them so far in the story? Are they internal, external, both? Explain what each conflict is and why you see it as being one of the two most important ones.
5. One of the articles you read this weekend from e! Science News (<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2010/01/25/elementary.school.women.teachers.transfer.their.fear.doing.math.girls>) states that “female elementary teachers who are anxious about math pass on the stereotype that boys, not girls, are good at math.” Now, consider the adult figures we’ve met so far in the novel – Aunt Adelaide, Mr. Garrulity, the adults of Radix, the men in tall hats and long red coats in Tessellate, Mr. Morose. In what ways do these adults pass on certain viewpoints, fears, or suspicions to the youth they encounter? What positive messages do some of them pass on to their young people?
6. What is happening in Tessellate as a result of the fog? In what *ways* might the fog be a symbol for the ways in which the people of Tessellate behave, speak, and think? Give some examples.