

TIME CAPSULE



LAUREN REDNISS

Author of National Book Award Finalist *RADIOACTIVE*

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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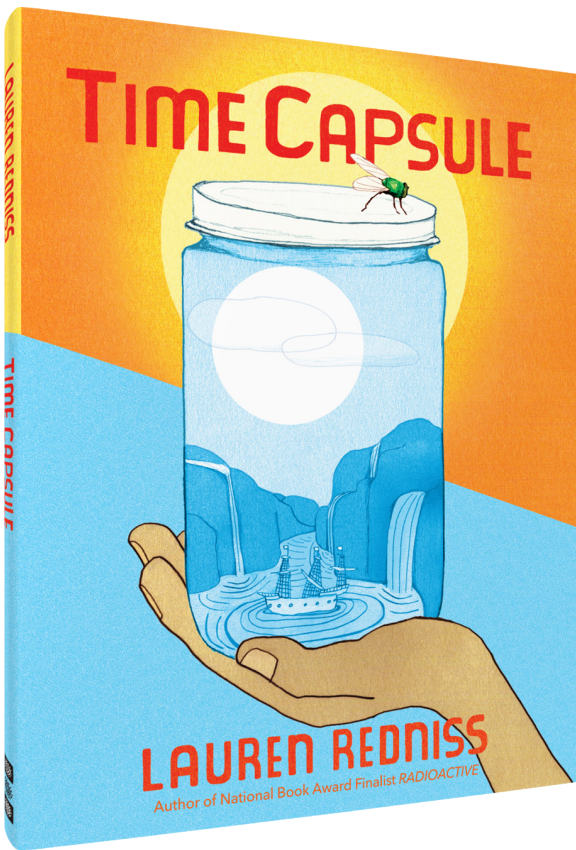


**MAKE ME
A WORLD**

TIME CAPSULE



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Grades: Preschool-3 • Lauren Redniss



About the Book

The joy a child finds in making their own time capsule filled with everyday objects comes alive in this inviting picture book from the MacArthur fellow and award-winning author of *Radioactive* and *Oak Flat*.

A set of dice. A grandmother's ring. The key to an old house. A child gathers keepsakes from everyday life, seals them in a jar, and buries them underground. A gift from the present day to the people of the future that tells a story about the past. A time capsule.

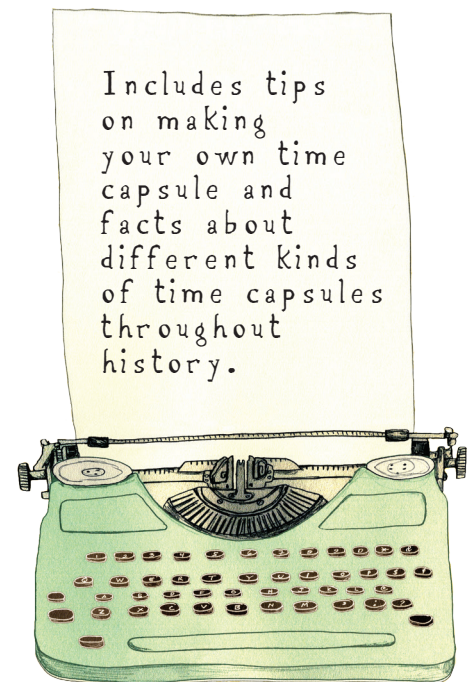
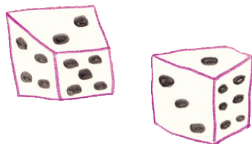
The first book for children by renowned artist and writer Lauren Redniss will get readers thinking about the times they are living through and how their world will be remembered in ages to come. It will also spark creativity, inviting young people to envision the future and to make their own time capsules.



Photo credit: Whitney Chandler

About the Author

Lauren Redniss is an author, an artist, and a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant." Her previous books for adults include *Radioactive*, a finalist for the National Book Award, and *Thunder & Lightning*, winner of the PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Her most recent book is *Oak Flat*, which the *New York Times* called "astonishing" and "brilliant." *Time Capsule* is her first book for children.



Pre-Reading Questions

Show the book cover and read the title aloud.

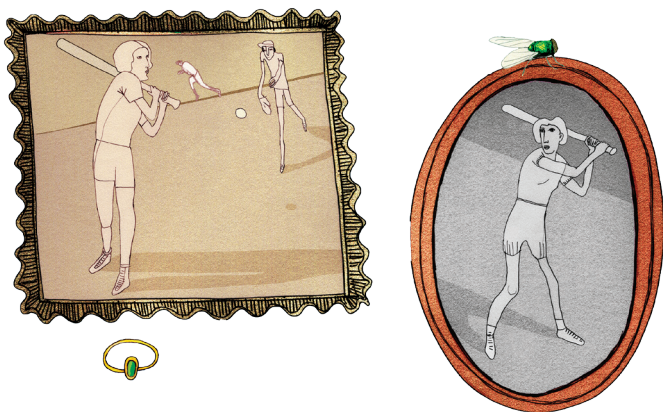
Ask students:

- What do you think this story will be about?
- What is a time capsule? Does the cover give us any clues?
- What is your eye most drawn to on the cover?
- What else do you notice about the cover?

As You Read

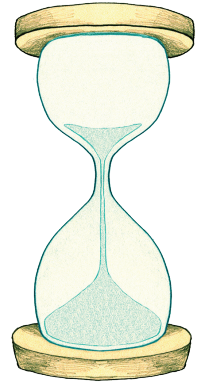
The story and illustrations naturally prompt questions and reflections, but as it is short, consider waiting to discuss until after you've finished reading. (If you plan to share the author's note, discuss the story first.) Ask students to offer their reactions with prompts that begin with "I wonder," "I am curious about," "I noticed," "I feel," or "I am interested in." Also ask, "Did the story leave you wanting to know more about time capsules?"

The author's note includes detailed information, which could be summarized in sections to make it more accessible for emerging readers. If you read the author's note aloud, first explain what it is, why it is part of the book, and what it offers to readers. As you read and discuss, talk about what the author's purpose is and how the author's note expands on the story.



Post-Reading Questions

- What is a time capsule?
- Why is the girl making a time capsule?
- What can you tell about the girl from the objects she puts in the jar? Do these objects help tell the story of her life? How?
- Do you think the things she saves are valuable? Why or why not?
- How do you think she was able to include a nightmare and a dream in her time capsule?
- Do you think the objects in the jar will be safe underground for 100 years? Can you think of anything that might happen to the jar over that period?
- Did you notice the insect that appears on many of the pages in the book? What happens to the insect?
- How can nature create its own time capsules?
- What do you think time capsules can tell us about history?
- How do we know about things that happened in the past?
- What do you know about what the world was like 100 years ago? What do you imagine the world will be like 100 years from now?
- How do you think the world we are living in now will be remembered in 100 years?
- Have you ever made a time capsule?
- What's special about marking individual experiences of important periods in history using time capsules?



Activities



Class Time Capsule

Time Capsule offers suggestions for creating a time capsule that represents an individual. Make a class time capsule. Work together to decide what to include.

After reading *Time Capsule*, students will be excited to make their own! Discuss how history is about events in their lives as well as in the broader world. Ask them to share their ideas about what messages they want to send to the future, and work together to set a purpose for their class time capsule.



Have students consider . . .

Purpose	What does the time capsule represent? Does the capsule cover daily life, current science and technology, memorable school events, or a special occasion, for example?
What to include	What objects or information fit the purpose? What meaning will each object communicate to someone in the future? What will be included to identify the objects in the capsule? Will the objects selected survive? Will actual objects be included or images of objects? Why? Make sure students include a letter to whomever opens the capsule. What needs to be explained?
When to open	How long will the time capsule be stored? Would students like to be there when it is opened?
What to use for a container	What can safely store the items? How big does it need to be?
Involving others	Will you have a sealing and burial ceremony? Will there be a plaque or marker noting the existence of the time capsule?

Teachers and Librarians, Lauren would love to see your time capsules! If you share them on social media please tag her on Twitter and Instagram @laurenredniss.

Resources:

- Register your class time capsule with the International Time Capsule Society itsoc.org/register-a-time-capsule
- Library of Congress: Make a Time Capsule loc.gov/preservation/resources/educational/timecapsule/index.html



Open a Time Capsule

Present your class with artifacts from your own history, and have them determine the story your “time capsule” tells.

Providing students with your “time capsule” will require some advance preparation. Gather items and ideas that were important to you when you were their age. If you have actual memorabilia from your childhood, consider sharing or taking photos or making copies of items such as:

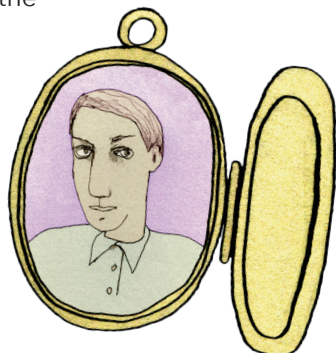
- Photographs
- Report cards
- Certificates or awards
- Special gifts, such as jewelry or books
- Favorite toys
- An image from your favorite movie (or the VHS or DVD)
- Technology that was available to you

Put everything you wish to share in a box and label it with the appropriate date from the past. You might also build excitement by including an “open by” date on your box.

Arrange students in small groups, and provide each group with several artifacts. Alternatively, set up stations, each with a few artifacts, and let students rotate to examine them and answer these questions about each object:

- What is this object?
- What do you know or think about this object?
- What do you wonder about this object?
- Do you see any of your own family history reflected in this object?

After their examination of objects, have students share their questions and ideas with their small groups. Looking at all the objects together, the groups should explain what story they think this time capsule tells. Have groups report to the class so they can share their insights and compare their ideas.



Living Time Capsule

Exploring their own personal or family stories can be key to helping students understand time and change.

One way that students can make a direct connection with the past is to interview a grandparent (or an adult from an older generation) about a topic that they both have experience with—school! School, which is a big part of students’ lives, is something that previous generations have also experienced but has undergone change.

As a class, decide on a set of open-ended questions that all students can ask in person, over the phone, or via video chat. After you model how to conduct the interview, give students an opportunity to practice asking the questions in pairs. Send a note home to parents about the oral history interview, along with a form with the questions. Encourage students to ask for copies of photographs so they can compare them with their own school experiences.

After students conduct their interviews, have them share and compare what they learned. To extend the activity, students could predict what future students might want to know about the school experience in the past and give their own oral histories about their school year.



Timeline to the Future

Timelines are a great way to help students think about change and can be an important tool in understanding history. Make events in time visible for students with a collectively constructed classroom timeline.

Start with students thinking about important events in their own lives. Have them choose five important personal or family events that have taken place in their lifetime, and make a timeline on a sheet of paper that begins with their birth and includes those events and their dates.

When students have a good understanding of how a timeline works, affix a clothesline across the classroom (at student height). Clip an index card with

the current year in the center of the rope. Next, create an index card with the date 100 years ago, and pin it to the beginning of the rope. Make a card with the date 100 years from now, and pin it to the end of the rope. Add a card with the year of your birth and have students do the same. They may also want to add the birthdates of their interview subjects.

Let students add cards as they encounter dates. Suggest that they could add events mentioned in the author's note. Can they think of anything else to add? They may begin to notice how history surrounds them. Include the date that their school building was constructed, when your town was founded, and anything else that interests them. You may need to lengthen your clothesline if student interests go back further than 100 years.

Students can also take the timeline into the future! Have them consider what they want to do in the future and grow their personal timelines to include their future milestones and how they will achieve them. On the clothesline, they can include possible dates of their future, such as college graduation, a vacation to the moon, as well as things humans anticipate, such as the return of Halley's Comet.

Encourage students to view, reference, and add to the timeline spontaneously as they make discoveries about and connections between the past, present, and future.

Story of Your Life

Have students take or draw a picture of the three things that are the most important to them right now. For each item, ask them to write a short explanation of what the item is and why it is important. Ask them not to include their name on their work. Display the images and text and give students time to look at everyone's work with the purpose of trying to identify the author or the experiences, ideas, and changes that the images represent.

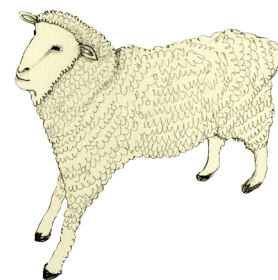
Writing History

Ask students what they think about the objects the girl added to her time capsule in the book.

Ask them to pick an object and write their own story about what that object means to the girl.

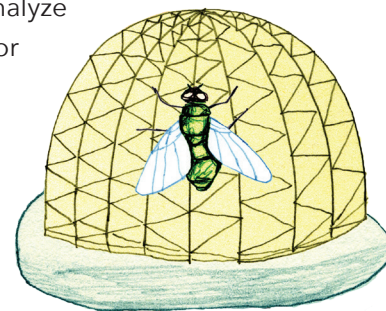
Have them write the story from the girl's perspective in the form of a journal entry or a personal letter.

- Lucky dice
- Baby tooth
- Ring from her grandmother
- Blue marble
- Walter the plastic sheep
- Old house key
- Aquarium ticket



Drawing from History

As a class, discuss things happening right now that are important to them, as well as what innovations and changes they are hoping for in the future. Divide students into groups of four. Provide one large sheet of paper and art supplies to each group. Invite half the groups to draw what the world is like now and the other half to draw what they imagine the future will look like. Encourage students to work together to edit or amend their group drawing until the group declares it complete. Once declared complete, have each future-drawing group combine with a group that drew the present. Have these larger groups critique and analyze the pictures, looking for signs of the present in the future drawings and hopes for the future in the current-day drawings.



Rachael Walker (belleofthebook.com) created this guide. She consults on a wide variety of educational programs and multimedia projects and develops educational materials and reading resources for children, parents, and teachers.



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