



CEC READING LIBRARY • MIDDLE 1 • R3 CHALLENGE

The Time Machine

18 Chapters

Day 1-18

W01-W06

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: A Machine in the Garage

VOCABULARY future, machine, secret, garage

On a Thursday evening in London, a group of friends gathered for dinner at the home of an inventor. They knew him only as the Time Traveller, because he often talked about a strange idea: that time is simply a fourth direction, like length, width, and height. His friends smiled politely. Then he showed them a tiny model of brass and ivory with a glowing crystal rod. He pressed a lever, and the model vanished before their eyes. It had gone into the future, he said, or the past. The room fell silent. What the guests did not know was that in a locked garage behind the house, he had been building a full-size machine in secret for years. It had a saddle, two levers, and quartz bars that shone in the lamplight. He had worked at night and kept the door closed, because he did not want anyone to laugh at him before it was finished. Years earlier, a school friend had laughed when he first spoke of such a journey, and the memory still stung. Since then he had studied clocks, crystals, and the strange mathematics of motion. He had asked himself a hundred times what he would do if the machine worked, and what he would do if it did not. Both answers made his heart beat faster. Tonight, with the lamp turned low and the garage cool and quiet, he walked once around the machine, touching each lever as a rider touches a horse before a long race. ★ **He built a special machine.** Now he was ready to sit in the saddle and travel to the future.

THINK What did the model do?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: The Work in Secret

The Time Traveller had never been a patient man, yet building the machine taught him patience. He drew plans on the back of old letters and tested each part many times. When a spring failed, he made a new one. When a rod bent, he began again. His housekeeper often found him at dawn, asleep at the workbench with oil on his sleeves. He told no one about his progress, because he wanted to surprise his friends with something real, not just an idea. His secret was a kind of treasure, and he guarded it. Neighbors heard odd noises from the garage and whispered about them. Some thought he was making a clock; others thought he was a magician. He only smiled when they asked. At last, on a quiet morning, the final bar was screwed into place and the dials turned smoothly. There were nights when he nearly gave up. Once, a whole week of work was ruined when a crystal cracked, and he sat in the dark for an hour without speaking. Then he laughed at himself, sharpened a pencil, and drew a better plan. He learned that a failed test is not an enemy but a teacher. Each broken part showed him a mistake he would never make again. By the end, the workbench was covered with notes, and every note had once been a problem. ★ He built a special machine in secret. Now he needed only the courage to use it, and the future would show whether his secret had been worth keeping.

THINK Who found him asleep at the workbench?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: Why He Built It

Why would a person spend years building a machine that might never work? The Time Traveller had one answer: curiosity. Since boyhood he had wondered what became of people, cities, and ideas after the world had grown old. Books gave him the past, and newspapers gave him the present, but nobody could give him the future. He wanted to see it with his own eyes. He also knew the danger. Nobody had ever tried such a journey, and no map showed what lay ahead. A mistake with the levers might send him to a moment before humans or after the sun had grown cold. Still, he told himself that great discoveries had always begun with someone willing to try. On the night before his trip, he packed matches, a camera, and a small bag of food. He often thought of the ancient astronomers, who looked at the stars night after night without any machine to carry them there. If they could be patient for a lifetime, he could be brave for a single journey. Curiosity, he believed, was the engine of all progress. It had given people ships, bridges, and medicine. It might also give them knowledge of what comes next, and perhaps a warning, if a warning were needed. That thought made him feel the weight of what he was about to do. ★ He secretly built a time machine because he wanted to explore the far future. Then he sat down in the saddle, took a deep breath, and gently pushed the lever forward.

THINK What did the Traveller pack?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: The Year 802,701

VOCABULARY peaceful, travel

The machine trembled and hummed. Outside the glass, the sun streaked across the sky like a bright ribbon, and the days flickered like a candle in the wind. The Time Traveller held on tightly, afraid that he would be thrown out. Finally, he pulled the lever back, and the machine rolled to a stop. The year on his dial read 802,701. Rain fell around him as he stepped out onto wet grass. In front of him stood a huge white statue of a sphinx on a stone base, its face worn by weather. Beyond it, he saw tall, ruined buildings covered in ivy and flowers. Everything looked green and calm. He had expected towers and flying ships, but this future seemed quiet and peaceful. He wondered where all the machines and cities of his own time had gone. The air smelled different here, fresh and sweet, as if the whole world had been washed clean. He checked his dials twice, then three times, to be sure that he had not made a mistake. Birds he could not name sang in the trees, and a soft wind moved the tall grass. He took out his notebook and wrote the date, though he was not sure what date it was. In a world so far from home, even a simple habit felt like a comforting hand on his shoulder. ★ **He arrived in the future.** He did not yet know that the quiet landscape was hiding a secret, and that the long journey had only just begun to travel into surprise.

THINK What year did the dial show?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 5: A Garden Without Machines

The Time Traveller walked slowly through the garden-like land. He expected to find workshops and factories, but there was nothing of the kind. There were no chimneys, no roads, and no noise. Gardens flowed into one another, and huge flowers bent over the paths. In the distance, a few small, graceful figures in bright robes ran and played beside a river. They looked like children, though they were full-grown. The air smelled of fruit and sweet blossoms, and the sky was soft blue. He thought that humankind had at last built the perfect world. No hunger, no illness, and no hard work seemed to trouble these people. Yet something about the stillness made him uneasy. Where were the old people? Where were the farms and the shops? He picked up a fallen fruit, round and golden, and tasted it carefully. It was sweet and juicy, and he realized how hungry he had been. All around him, the plants grew thick and bright, as if the land itself had been tended for ages. Yet he saw no farmer and no tool. The Traveller wondered how people could live so peacefully without anything to do, and he promised himself that he would be a patient observer before he drew any conclusions. ★ **He arrived in a beautiful future world.** For now, he decided to explore carefully, and to remember that a place can look beautiful and still be hiding questions that have not yet been asked.

THINK What did the figures look like?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: The Perfect-Looking Future

Days passed, and the Time Traveller learned the daily rhythm of the small people. They ate fruit together in great halls, slept in groups, and played in the sun. They never argued, and they never hurried. At first he thought this was the dream of every dreamer. But slowly he noticed gaps in the picture. The small people did not seem interested in anything beyond the next game. When he asked about their history, they only laughed and looked at him as if he had asked something silly. When he tried to teach them a simple tool, they lost patience in a few minutes. He began to ask himself if a world without difficulty had also lost the wish to think. He wrote in his notebook: "Comfort is a quiet kind of danger." On the fourth day, he sat on a hill and watched the small people for hours. A boy dropped his fruit and cried, and three others laughed, then forgot all about it within a minute. Nobody comforted him, and nobody seemed to need comforting. The Traveller felt as if he were watching a beautiful play in which every actor had forgotten the words. He closed his notebook and promised to look for the missing parts of the story, because he knew that every picture has a back side. ★ He arrived in a beautiful future world that looked peaceful on the surface. He decided that he must look beneath the surface, wherever it might lead him, to find out how this world really worked.

THINK What did the small people do all day?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: The Gentle People

The small people called themselves the Eloi, and the Time Traveller soon grew fond of them. They were gentle, and they treated him with kindness. A girl named Weena, who was about the size of a child of six, followed him wherever he went. She laughed when he laughed, gave him flowers, and placed them in his pockets. One day, he saw her tumble into the river while the others merely watched. He jumped in and pulled her out, and she hugged him with surprising strength. From that day on, they were friends. He admired the Eloi for their cheerful nature, but he found it strange that nobody else had tried to save her. They seemed to have forgotten how to help each other in a real emergency. Weena became his shadow, and he came to love her cheerful chatter even though he understood only a few words of it. She taught him the names of flowers, and he taught her to count on her fingers. In the evenings, she curled up beside him and sang a little tune. The Traveller smiled at her kindness and thought how much better the world would be if everyone could be so gentle. But he could not forget the strange, quiet corners of the land where the singing stopped. ★ **He met gentle small people.** The Traveller wondered how humans had become so small, so easy-going, and so unprepared. The answer, he suspected, would not be pleasant, and it might lie far below the ground.

THINK Who followed the Traveller around?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 8: Life Without Problems

For several days, the Time Traveller watched the Eloi closely. They woke with the sun, ate fruit from the trees, danced, and slept in the great halls. No one built anything new. No one repaired the old buildings, which were slowly crumbling. They did not read, because the books in the old museum had turned to dust. When he asked who made their clothes or grew their fruit, the Eloi seemed puzzled by the question. The Traveller felt both admiration and sadness. He admired their calm, but he felt sorry that they had no purpose. He thought of his own world, where people struggled with hard problems and sometimes became cruel. It was hard, but it also made them clever and strong. Here, nobody was cruel, but nobody was clever either. He walked through an old hall whose roof had fallen in and whose statues were covered with moss. Beneath the dust, he found rows of rusted shelves and the leather covers of long-forgotten books. He picked one up, and its pages crumbled between his fingers. It saddened him that so much knowledge had turned to powder, with nobody left to care. Then he sat on the stone steps, listened to the wind, and wondered whether his own world would one day be just as quiet. ★ **He met gentle, small people who lived happily.** And yet, he wondered, was their happiness real, or was it only the quiet of a mind that had stopped growing? Though he liked them, a small shadow of doubt grew in his heart.

THINK What happened to the books in the museum?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: Minds That Stopped Growing

One afternoon, the Time Traveller tried an experiment. He drew a simple picture of a tree, then a house, then a boat, and asked the Eloi to say what the pictures meant. Some laughed and clapped. A few named the tree. Nobody could tell him why a boat floats. He tried to explain how fire is made, and the Eloi lost interest after a minute. He saw that the people were not stupid. They were simply unused to effort. Long ago, he guessed, their ancestors had made the world so safe that thinking was no longer needed. With every easy generation, the power to think hard had shrunk, like a muscle that is never used. This explained the broken buildings and the empty libraries. The Traveller felt a cold touch of worry for his own time. He tried once more, this time with a game. He put a few coins on the grass and showed the Eloi how to count them in pairs. A few children grew excited, then wandered off to chase butterflies. The Traveller laughed, but not unkindly. He knew that he had no right to blame them. They had inherited a world that asked nothing of them, and they had answered with perfect, gentle laziness. The lesson, he felt, was meant for his own people more than for them.

★ He met gentle, small people who lived happily but seemed unable to think deeply. He understood now that comfort without challenge could slowly make a mind small, and that this was the real lesson of the Eloi.

THINK What did the Traveller draw?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 10: The Wells in the Ground

VOCABULARY discovery, secret

Among the gardens, the Time Traveller found round stone towers with deep, dark shafts. Warm air blew up from them, and from far below came a steady thumping sound, like a great machine. He dropped a pebble and listened, but never heard it land. The Eloi avoided these shafts and became nervous when the sun began to set. As evening came, they huddled together in the great halls, and Weena clung to his sleeve. He asked what frightened them, and she whispered a word he did not understand: "Morlocks." Her small hands shook. That night, he lay awake and listened. Something moved in the darkness outside, and he glimpsed pale shapes with large, glowing eyes at the edge of the garden. His heart pounded. He realized that the peaceful world had a second half that he had not yet seen. He walked all around the nearest tower, touching its cold stone and listening to the hum below. The sound rose and fell like a giant's breath. Flowers grew thickly beside it, but the Eloi never picked them there. He wrote in his notebook, in careful letters, that the quiet world above must depend upon some great machine below. Weena watched him from a distance, twisting her fingers. When he waved to her, she shook her head and would not come any closer. ★

He saw something strange underground. It was his first great discovery, and it was also his first real fear. The secret of the Eloi was lying beneath their feet.

THINK *What came from far below?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: Down the Shaft

VOCABULARY discovery, secret

The next morning, the Time Traveller made a decision. He would go down into one of the shafts and see what lay below. Weena begged him not to, and tears ran down her face. He kissed her forehead and promised to return before dark. With a rope, a box of matches, and a small lamp, he climbed over the rim and began descending a rusty ladder. The air grew hot and damp. After some minutes, his feet touched a stone floor. In the dim light of his match, he saw a long tunnel, huge wheels turning slowly, and heaps of machinery covered with dust. In a corner, he heard soft pattering feet. Pale, ape-like creatures with big grey eyes stared at him from the shadows. They were the Morlocks. The match burned out and, in the dark, one of them touched his hand with cold fingers. He thought later that it was the bravest and most foolish thing he had ever done. In the darkness, a smell of oil and old stone hung in the air, and far away a great engine thumped like a heart. Every step revealed a new puzzle. At each corner he wondered how many hands had made this place, and how long the work had gone on. The discovery filled him with wonder, but the secret of the tunnels also made him tremble, and he knew that he would have to climb out soon. ★ He saw something strange deep underground. He struck another match and the creatures drew back at once. Light, he realized, was the one thing they feared.

THINK What did the Traveller carry down?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 12: Two Peoples, One World

VOCABULARY explore, realize

Back above ground, the Time Traveller sat beside the river and thought about what he had seen. Slowly, the puzzle came together. In his own time, rich families lived in bright houses, and poor workers labored in dark factories. Over many thousands of years, he reasoned, the two groups had drifted so far apart that they had become two different peoples. The gentle Eloi lived on the sunlit surface, while the Morlocks stayed below and kept the great machines working. It seemed fair at first: the underground workers served the surface people. But the Traveller saw the darker side. The Eloi, protected and soft, had grown helpless, and the Morlocks now watched them with hungry, calculating eyes. He felt pity for both. This was not a simple story of good and evil. It was the result of a long, slow division between those who had everything and those who had none. As the sun set, he went on thinking. He tried to explore each idea fairly, as a scientist would, asking what was proven and what was only guessed. He had no proof of the Morlocks' habits, yet every clue pointed the same way. Weena slept with her head on his coat, and he looked down at her gentle face. Whatever the truth was, he decided, he would protect her. A new feeling stirred in him, not curiosity this time, but responsibility, and it was heavier than any machine. ★ **He saw something strange underground that completely changed how he viewed this world.** He realized that his own century might be the beginning.

THINK Who lived on the surface?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: The Empty Pedestal

VOCABULARY suddenly, disappeared, machine, travel

The Time Traveller hurried back across the meadow to the white sphinx, where he had left his machine. He wanted to climb into the saddle, travel a little further, and see more of the world. But when he reached the stone base, he stopped. The grass was trampled, and the machine had suddenly disappeared. Only two long scratches marked the place where it had stood. He knelt down and ran his fingers along the ground. His heart sank. Without the machine, he would be trapped in this strange world forever. Then he noticed small footprints leading toward the sphinx. The base had a hidden door that he had not seen before, now closed tight. He pounded on the bronze panels and shouted, but only an echo answered. The Morlocks had taken his machine inside the pedestal. He had to travel back to the thought that haunted him: they were clever, and they were waiting. He sat down on the cold ground and forced himself to breathe slowly. Panic, he knew, was the quickest way to make another mistake. He listed the facts in his notebook: the machine had been moved, the Morlocks were strong in the dark, and he had a few matches and a loyal friend. That was not much, but it was something. He stood up, brushed the dust off his knees, and looked at the white sphinx with a quiet, stubborn determination. ★ **His time machine disappeared suddenly.**

THINK Where did the Traveller leave his machine?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: Night Is Coming

VOCABULARY suddenly, disappear, machine

Evening was approaching, and the Time Traveller knew that darkness belonged to the Morlocks. He had to find shelter, or at least light. Weena walked bravely beside him, though her hands were cold. He thought about the ruined palace of green porcelain that he had seen on a distant hill. Its high walls might offer safety. As they hurried through the forest, shadows grew longer and the sky turned orange, then violet. He gathered dry branches and a few handfuls of camphor from the old museum. Weena picked flowers to keep from crying. At night, small pale lights moved between the trees, and the sound of soft padding feet followed them. The Traveller held his matches carefully and counted them. Only a few remained. If the machine had not suddenly disappeared at night, he told himself, they would already have been home. They stopped once to rest beneath an old oak. Weena put her head on his arm, and he listened to her breathing grow calm. Overhead, the first stars came out, small and sharp, and he recognised none of the old patterns. The thought made him feel very far from home. He took a piece of fruit from his pocket and shared it with her. Then he stood, lifted her onto his shoulder, and walked on, because slowing down would only give the darkness more time. ★ **His time machine suddenly disappeared at night.** Now, he and Weena had to survive until morning.

THINK What did the Traveller gather?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: Fire in the Forest

VOCABULARY disappeared, workshop, search

In the forest, the Time Traveller lit a fire, and the Morlocks stopped at the edge of the light. Their eyes shone like lamps. He fed the flames with dry branches and held up burning sticks, and the creatures drew back. The fire spread through the dry leaves, and soon the whole hillside glowed red. Smoke filled the air. Weena, tired and frightened, leaned against him, and he carried her toward the hill where the pale palace stood. When the flames rose high, the Morlocks fled in all directions, confused by the light. By dawn, the fire had died down, and the forest lay black and silent. The Traveller and Weena were safe, lying in the grass, with ash on their faces. He did not wait. He ran to the sphinx, forced open the hidden door, and found his machine in a dim room, as if it had never moved. The long search was over. Later, he thought about what a fire really meant. For his own people, it was a tool as old as the first workshop; for the Morlocks, it was a fearful marvel. He looked at the scorched trees and felt sorry for the damage, but he knew that it had saved their lives. At the foot of the great white pedestal, he lifted the bronze panel with a lever from his pocket. Behind it lay the machine, clean and untouched, with its crystal bars gleaming faintly in the gloom. ★ **His time machine suddenly disappeared, and he needed to find it before dark.** Now it was time to go home.

THINK What did the Traveller use against the Morlocks?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Home Again

VOCABULARY believe, return, story, friend

The Time Traveller climbed into the saddle, pulled the lever, and the world began to spin backward. Day and night flickered, and the sphinx and the flowers faded into a grey mist. Finally, the machine stopped in the very same laboratory where it had begun. The clock on the wall showed that only a few hours had passed. His dinner guests were still talking in the next room. When he walked in, dusty, tired, and holding a notebook, they stared at him in surprise. He looked thin, and his hair was messy. "I have a story to tell you," he said, "and it is true." He sat down beside the fire and began to describe the white sphinx, the gentle Eloi, and the pale creatures below. His friends listened with wide eyes. Some shook their heads. He remembered Weena and felt a small ache, but he was glad to be among friends again. As the machine rushed through the centuries, he looked back once at the world he was leaving. He thought of Weena and her small, bright flowers, and wished that he could have taken her with him. But he knew that she belonged to her own time. The ride was long and rough, and he gripped the handlebars until his fingers hurt. When the motion finally stopped, he sat quietly for a moment, amazed to hear the familiar tick of his own wall clock and the murmur of friends. ★ **He returned home with a story.** Whether anyone would believe it was another question.

THINK *Where did the machine stop?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: An Amazing Tale

VOCABULARY story, returned

The Time Traveller's story lasted through the night. He told it calmly and clearly, from the first lever to the last match. He described the Eloi, who laughed and forgot, and the Morlocks, who waited and worked. He told how the fire had saved him and how the machine had been returned. The guests listened in silence, and the lamp burned low. At times, the journalist asked questions, the doctor smiled gently, and the young man by the window stayed very quiet. When the Traveller finished, the clock struck three. It was an amazing story, full of strange sights and hard questions, and everyone knew it. Yet it was also so wild that no one could easily say yes. The Traveller leaned forward and added, softly, that he did not need them to agree at once. He wanted only that they would think about what kind of world they were building, today, for those who would come after. He spoke about the lessons he had learned. A world without work, he said, could lose its mind. A world divided between rich and poor could lose its heart. Neither, he thought, was a future anyone wanted. His friends nodded slowly. The journalist tapped his pen on the table, the doctor stirred his tea, and even the doubtful young man looked thoughtful. Outside, the first grey light touched the windows, and the birds began to sing as they had always done. ★

He returned home with an amazing story.

THINK What time did the clock strike?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: A Flower as Proof

VOCABULARY story, returned

When the Traveller finished, his friends looked at one another. The journalist said it was a clever tale. The doctor said that a man who works too hard can imagine many things. Nobody was rude, but nobody truly believed him. The Traveller said nothing at first. Then he slowly reached into his pocket and took out two small white flowers, flat and a little dry. They were unlike any flower in England. Weena had put them there on the last evening, and he had nearly forgotten them. He laid them on the table. The doctor lifted one under the lamp and frowned. It had strange petals and an unfamiliar smell. The room was silent. The Traveller smiled, tired but peaceful, and said that tomorrow he would make one more journey, with a camera. His friends found his story very hard to believe, but they could not quite explain away the flowers. In the morning, the garage door stood open, and the machine was gone once more. After they left, the Traveller sat alone in the garage and studied the machine. He packed a new bag with matches, a notebook, and, this time, a camera. He looked at the dials, took a deep breath, and smiled. He did not know what he would find, nor whether he would return. But he knew that the journey was worth taking, and that the world, like a good story, always has one more chapter waiting to be read. The lamp flickered, and the garage grew quiet. ★ He returned home with an amazing story, but his friends found it very hard to believe.

THINK What did the Traveller take from his pocket?