



Tim learning guide

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Tim: a learning guide

Now that you've finished reading *Tim*, what did you think of it? This learning guide will help you understand it better and understand your *own* thoughts about the story. No book has one single interpretation. Every story means different things to different people. You could think of it as the story and the reader (you!) being in conversation. Let's find out what you and *Tim* have to say!



What's it all about? Theme

There are many different events and ideas in *Tim*. What do you think is the **main**, most important one? (Check one.)

- Heroes and mentors
- Friendship
- Growing up
- Learning to trust oneself
- Taking responsibility
- Family
- Other (write it here):

This is what you could call the **theme** of the book: the most important subject that the book talks about. What are three events in the book that show the theme you've chosen?

1

2

3

Hockey!

“But wait a minute!” I can hear you say. “This book is about hockey, isn’t it?” Yes, it certainly is. But maybe hockey is more like a pattern of ripples in the ice than it is like the skating rink, itself. Like the ripples in the rink, hockey is always present in the story; but I would say it’s not the main point. For example, you can find hockey in each of the themes you thought about earlier. Try it out!

Theme	Example of how hockey is present in this theme.
Heroes and mentors (example)	<i>Tim Horton, a famous hockey player, is Atlas’ biggest hero. When Tim appears to Atlas in the bathroom mirror, he becomes Atlas’ mentor, too. Tim gives Atlas advice on all the things he is struggling with.</i>
Friendship	
Growing up	
Learning to trust oneself	
Taking responsibility	
Family	

Did you find a hockey example or connection for each theme?

Heroes and mentors

Some questions to make you think . . .

What do you think is the difference between a hero and a mentor?

Have you ever had a hero who turned out to be different than you expected? How did you feel?

Do you think being disappointed in a hero happens to adults? Can you think of an example?

What did you think about Mr. Wick not allowing students to write about their hero mothers? Why?

Do you think Atlas is a hero? Explain your thinking.

Friendship

Some questions to make you think . . .

Do you think Atlas is a good friend to Campbell? Why or why not? Is Harper a good friend to Atlas? Why or why not?

Peter and Jimmy Zimlinski are very different but they have one important thing in common: they both lack friends at school. How is this bad for each of them in different ways?

Do you know anyone who is friendless like this? Do you think there's anything you can do about it?



Growing up

Some questions to make you think . . .

What are some of the grown-up things that Atlas does in the book?

Which one do you think was the biggest struggle for him? Why was it difficult? Why did he choose to do it anyway?

Which growing up things were easier for Atlas? Why? What does all this make you think about growing up?



Learning to trust oneself

Some questions to make you think . . .

Atlas wants a mentor to tell him what to do because he doesn't trust himself. Why do you think he feels this way?

Tim eventually leaves Atlas and Atlas has to make his own decisions and trust himself. Do you think he was ready for this? Why or why not?

Do you have new thoughts about trusting yourself after reading *Tim*? Write about it here.



Taking responsibility

Some questions to make you think . . .

What are some examples of times when Atlas took responsibility for things that were happening? Which do you think was the most important? Why?

Have you ever felt a sense of responsibility like Atlas feels for Peter? What was it like?

Does feeling responsible *make* you responsible for someone or for some situation? What do you think?



Family

Some questions to make you think . . .

What do you like or not like about Atlas' family? Why? Explain your thinking here.

Félix is becoming part of Atlas' family, and this is a big challenge for Atlas. What are some of the things that helped him?

Is there anything you learned from Atlas' experience that can help you in your own family?



Other topics

Some questions to make you think . . .

What do you love
(or not love!)
about hockey.

Did you know that Tim Horton was one of the most famous hockey players in the world before he gave his name to coffee and doughnuts? How can you find out more about him?

Write your
research ideas
here.

The book has a lot
of made-up street
names that relate
to hockey. Can you
figure them out?

Do you like comic
books? Why or
why not?

Seeing something through someone else's eyes is a sub-theme in the book—like when Atlas tries to understand what kind of gift Harper would like. We sometimes call this *empathy*.

Have you ever tried to see something through someone else's eyes? What happened? What did you learn?

Who was Atlas in mythology? Do you think the mythical Atlas is anything like Atlas in the story? Explain your thinking.



Final thoughts

I hope these questions have helped you understand the book, Tim—and, more importantly, *yourself*—better!

These are definitely not the only questions you could ask or the only things you could learn about through the book. One of the great things about books is that, when you read them again, you'll find a different story—because you will have changed. As I said at the beginning, no book has one single interpretation. Every story is a kind of conversation. I hope you will continue it!

