

# Treasure Island Study Guide

by Joy Hardin

For the novel by Robert Louis Stevenson



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**Treasure Island Study Guide**  
A Progeny Press Study Guide  
by Joy Hardin  
edited by Rebecca Gilleland  
cover art by Nathan Gilleland

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[www.progenypress.com](http://www.progenypress.com)

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-58609-524-6 Book  
978-1-58609-525-3 CD  
978-1-58609-526-0 Set

## **Study Guide Author**

**Joy Hardin** works with Paragon Cooperative Learning Academy, in Covington, Georgia, as a facilitator and teacher of middle school Composition II, a course designed to extend the writing process using skills learned in previous classes. She enjoys writing and editing through many different venues, including local churches, university classes, and freelance newspaper work. Joy is the mother of two grown children and currently lives in Loganville, Georgia.

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## Note to Instructor

**How to Use Progeny Press Study Guides.** Progeny Press study guides are designed to help students better understand and enjoy literature by getting them to notice and understand how authors craft their stories and to show them how to think through the themes and ideas introduced in the stories. To properly work through a Progeny Press study guide, students should have easy access to a good dictionary, a thesaurus, a Bible (we use NIV translation, but that is up to your preference; just be aware of some differences in language), and sometimes a topical Bible or concordance. Supervised access to the Internet also can be helpful at times, as can a good set of encyclopedias.

Most middle grades and high school study guides take from eight to ten weeks to complete, generally working on one section per week. Over the years, we have found that it works best if the students completely read the novel the first week, while also working on a prereading activity chosen by the parent or teacher. Starting the second week, most parents and teachers have found it works best to work on one study guide page per day until the chapter sections are completed. Students should be allowed to complete questions by referring to the book; many questions require some cross-reference between elements of the stories.

Most study guides contain an Overview section that can be used as a final test, or it can be completed in the same way the chapter sections were completed. If you wish to perform a final test but your particular study guide does not have an Overview section, we suggest picking a couple of questions from each section of the study guide and using them as your final test.

Most study guides also have a final section of essays and postreading activities. These may be assigned at the parents' or teachers' discretion, but we suggest that students engage in several writing or other extra activities during the study of the novel to complement their reading and strengthen their writing skills.

As for high school credits, most Christian high schools to whom we have spoken have assigned a value of one-fourth credit to each study guide, and this also seems to be acceptable to colleges assessing homeschool transcripts.

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### *Internet References*

All websites listed in this study guide were checked for appropriateness at the time of publication. However, due to the changing nature of the Internet, we cannot guarantee that the URLs listed will remain appropriate or viable. Therefore, we urge parents and teachers to take care in and exercise careful oversight of their children's use of the Internet.

## Synopsis

A tale of high adventure set in the 18th century by Robert Louis Stevenson, and his first published novel, *Treasure Island* is the story of a brave boy who sets off with an assorted cast of characters on a quest for buried treasure. When the story opens, Jim Hawkins lives with his parents who own and run the Admiral Benbow Inn near an unidentified British seashore. The arrival of Billy Bones the pirate changes their lives, eventually leading Jim's father to an early death, leaving Jim and his mother to run the inn. Soon afterwards, the arrival of another pirate to deliver the "black spot" (a death warning) to Billy Bones changes their lives even more. In fear and with a heart weakened from his rough lifestyle, Billy dies almost immediately, leaving a huge debt for his lengthy stay at the Admiral Benbow.

Knowing other pirates are soon to come to the inn to claim Billy's possessions, Mrs. Hawkins refuses to leave until she has taken enough from Billy's sea chest to offset his debt. With pirates on their trail, Mrs. Hawkins and Jim escape from the inn with a map from Billy's sea chest. Jim and Mrs. Hawkins get help from Dr. Livesey and Squire Trelawney, who identify the map as a genuine treasure map. The squire goes to Bristol to find a ship and crew to prepare for a voyage to Treasure Island. His lack of discretion, however, regarding the quest for hidden treasure attracts a crew of pirates masquerading as honest sailors.

During the voyage Jim overhears a conversation that reveals the crew's true identity, and by the time they reach the island the pirates have mutinied. Their leader turns out to be Long John Silver himself, the one-legged man Billy Bones most feared.

Once on the island, they find a castaway named Ben Gunn, who is befriended by Jim. With Ben's help and knowledge of the island, Jim and his friends struggle to find the treasure and stay one step ahead of the pirates. But Long John Silver still has a part to play, and only he knows his heart and whom he'll help in the end.



## Part VI—Captain Silver

### Chapters 28–34

#### Vocabulary:

Read the sentence from the book, then answer the question about the underlined word by choosing the correct response.

1. “The red glare of the torch, lighting up the interior of the block house, showed me the worst of my apprehensions realized.”  
If someone is filled with apprehensions, he is filled with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. anger, fury
  - b. fear, worries, or anxieties
  - c. understanding
  - d. capabilities; confidences
2. “‘You’ll perhaps batten down your hatches till you’re spoke to, my friend,’ cried Silver truculently to this speaker.”  
If someone speaks truculently, he is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. aggressively defiant
  - b. fearful
  - c. truthful and honest
  - d. patient; calm

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3. “Silver briefly agreed, and this emissary retired again, leaving us together in the dark.”  
If someone is an emissary, he is a \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. liar  
b. friend  
c. mutineer  
d. messenger
4. “I could just make out that he had a book as well as a knife in his hand, and was still wondering how anything so incongruous had come in their possession.”  
If something is incongruous, it is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. unable to grow  
b. inappropriate; out of place  
c. reliable or steady  
d. understandable or logical
5. “‘I thought you said you knowed the rules,’ returned Silver contemptuously.”  
If you speak contemptuously, you speak \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. sadly, disappointed  
b. with humor; jokingly  
c. convincingly; with persuasion  
d. without respect; disdainfully
6. “‘That’s for number one,’ cried the accused, wiping the sweat from his brow, for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house.”  
If someone is speaks with vehemence, he speaks with \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. violence or forcefulness of expression  
b. indifference; unconcern  
c. mildness or soft spoken  
d. happily, energetically joyful

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7. “But if it were inexplicable to me, the appearance of the chart was incredible to the surviving mutineers.”  
If something is inexplicable, it is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. a deep cavern unable to be explored  
b. logical or comprehensible  
c. baffling; unable to be explained  
d. a graph or map of a given area
8. “That come—as you call it—of . . . not having sense enough to know honest air from poison, and the dry land from a vile, pestiferous slough.”  
If something is pestiferous, it seems to be \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. harboring an infectious disease  
b. stiff and unbendable  
c. able to be perceived from any direction  
d. petty or insignificant
9. “You don’t appear to me to have the rudiments of a notion of the rules of health.”  
If someone lacks the rudiments of something, he is without \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. a concoction or potion  
b. the basic principles  
c. herbal remedies indigenous to an area  
d. concern or self-control
10. “And then he bade them get the fire lit, and stalked out upon his crutch, with his hand on my shoulder, leaving them in a disarray, and silenced by his volubility rather than convinced.”  
If they were silenced by his volubility, they were silenced by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. forcefulness and strength  
b. dangerous threats  
c. gratitude and thanks  
d. fluent unstoping speech

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11. “Sheer above us rose the Spyglass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices.”  
If you see precipices, you are seeing \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. rain in the form of hail; precipitation  
b. a type of bird  
c. a cliff with steep, vertical sides  
d. a black mineral layer in the rock
12. “And there was Silver, sitting back almost out of the firelight, but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter—the same bland, polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.”  
If one is obsequious, he is behaving in a way that is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. overly eager to please  
b. obnoxious or detestable  
c. disobedient, rebellious  
d. observant or perceptive
13. “Indeed, it was remarkable how well he bore these slights and with what unwearied politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all.”  
If someone tries to ingratiate themselves with others, he is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. unthankful or ungrateful  
b. trying to speak privately  
c. trying to get oneself into another’s good favor  
d. sharing or distributing items
14. “The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago, and he now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives, which would certainly have been forfeit if ‘that man with the one leg had stayed aboard.’”  
If someone connived to do something, he \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. misunderstood  
b. ignored what is happening  
c. plotted or planned to do wrong  
d. worked and struggled

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### **Questions:**

1. When Jim is captured by the pirates, what does he believe has happened to his companions?
2. What four grievances do the pirates give to justify having Silver deposed as captain? How does Silver refute their charges?
3. Why does the doctor come to the block-house? What does this tell you about the doctor's character?
4. Once they return home, what becomes of Ben Gunn?
5. What becomes of Long John Silver at the end of this tale?

### **Thinking About the Story:**

6. Silver tells Jim that the doctor has called him an “ungrateful scamp” and “I don't know where he is, confound him . . . nor I don't much care. We're about sick of him.” What is Silver's motive in these declarations?

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7. *Ambiguity* is a literary technique in which an author intentionally suggests more than one, and sometimes contradictory, interpretations of a situation or perception of a character. This uncertainty adds interest and dilemma to the story. What does Jim mean when he says Silver “still had a foot in either camp”? How do these constant changes in Silver’s loyalties make him an ambiguous character?
8. Some of the elements of the actual treasure map’s journey seem closely connected with Jim himself. When an author purposefully uses similar plots, characters, or other story elements, we call it *parallelism*. Since its discovery in Billy Bones’ sea chest, the map has been watched over by Jim and his companions. How does the map suddenly showing up in the hands of Silver parallel Jim’s capture by the pirates? What does this communicate about the current value of both the map and Jim?
9. *Anthropomorphism* is the act or practice of attributing human form or qualities to gods, animals, or things. It is a figure of speech in which a lifeless thing or quality is spoken of as if alive and it is attributing human characteristics and purposes to inanimate objects, animals, plants, or other natural phenomena. For example, “The music sobbed”; “Duty calls us”; “The flowers danced about the lawn.” To describe a rushing river as “angry” is to anthropomorphize it.
- Find the anthropomorphism in the following passages and explain what lifeless thing is given human characteristic and what that characteristic is. The first is done for you.
- a. “A full moon was beginning to rise and peered redly through the upper edges of the fog. . . .”
- The moon is able to peer through the fog. It is given the characteristic of sight.

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- b. “Long after that death yell was still ringing in my brain, silence had re-established its empire. . . .”
  - c. “There was sand in our eyes, sand in our teeth, sand in our suppers, sand dancing in the spring at the bottom of the kettle. . . .”
  - d. “The fog had now buried all heaven.”
10. When the pirates are holding Jim as hostage and Silver allows him to speak with Doctor Livesey alone, what does the doctor try to get Jim to do? Why does Jim refuse?
11. How does this compare to Jim’s slipping off the ship and sneaking away from the stockade earlier in the story? What does this tell you about Jim’s character now?
12. In this section, Robert Louis Stevenson picks up the pace and begins to end some of his chapters with *cliffhangers*. Authors use a technique called a cliffhanger to build suspense. In this approach, the writer sets up a point of suspense at the end of a chapter to make the reader want to read on quickly to discover what will happen next. In *Treasure Island*, the author employs this technique for the ending of two chapters in this section. Identify which chapters end in cliffhangers, and quote their closing sentences.

**Dig Deeper:**

13. When Jim and Doctor Livesey are allowed to speak, the doctor observes that at every step, it has been Jim who has saved their lives. Read Romans 8:28. What does this verse teach us? How do we see this in what Jim has managed to do, even though he twice ran away to adventure on his own?
  
14. When the doctor hears the three pirates left making noises between shrieking and singing, he wonders whether they are drunk or raving (fevered). If he were positive they were all sick and raving in fevers, what would he have done? Read James 3:13–18. These verses teach us what true wisdom looks like, and that it is full of mercy. Use a dictionary and write down the definition of mercy. How does the doctor's character show he is wise and merciful?



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14. Jim reminds Billy Bones of the doctor's warning. Jim justifies his actions by saying that Billy might disturb Jim's sick father who is having a bad day with his illness, and the doctor said that one glass wouldn't hurt Billy.

15. Memorizing and obeying God's word and seeking the Lord will help us stand strong in the face of temptation. We must also look for the way out that God provides and turn away from temptation.

### Part II—The Sea Cook

#### Chapters 7–12

##### Vocabulary:

1. anticipations, 2. commentary, 3. calumnies, 4. immortal, 5. indomitable, 6. lament, 7. anecdote, 8. burnished, 9. corruption, 10. congregated, 11. simultaneously, 12. avowed, 13. duplicity, 14. countenance, 15. agitated

##### Questions:

1. Long John Silver helps find the crew and fires two members the squire had hired.
2. Jim trusts Silver and would “go bail” for his innocence. He would also have put money on Silver's innocence.
3. Captain Smollett has them move the cabins of those he trusts and place the weapons in a more secure location, so the reliable men can form a garrison around the arms and powder.
4. He would like Captain Smollett to set the course and navigate them back into the trades, a difficult part of the voyage.
5. He wants to be the one to kill Squire Trelawney.
6. Someone shouts “land ho” as they sight Treasure Island, and everyone runs to look.

##### Thinking About the Story:

7. The fact that the crew is familiar with a pirate song was a warning of their true character and identity.
8. The doctor believes that because Jim is “noticing” or observant, and the men are comfortable enough to speak freely in front of him, he may be able to learn more and help them. Jim feels desperate and helpless.
9. Prior to Chapter 11, Stevenson gives clues to his readers, to lead them to suspect the pirates' motives, though the main characters remain unknowing. This transition section of Jim in the apple barrel and explaining to his friends allows the reader and the main characters to know who the antagonists are and to heighten the tension and the danger level of the story. We now all know they are in mortal danger and recognize that events will start to happen more quickly.
10. Answers will vary. A stereotypical pirate talks in a thick pirate dialect and drinks rum. Stereotypical pirates may have peg legs and hooks for one hand and own a parrot. They wear “piratical” clothing and boots and carry knives, swords, and pistols. Quotes will vary but may mention some of the following: Long John Silver is described by Jim as: “Very tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham—plain and pale, but intelligent and smiling. . . . He had a way of talking to each and doing everybody some particular service.” In his interaction with him Jim said, “He was too deep, and too ready, and too clever for me.” Jim's impression after his first meeting with him, “I would have gone bail for [his] innocence. . . . He made himself the most interesting companion. . . . I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates. . . . To me he was unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me.” Trelawney described him as “a man of substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn.” Long John Silver does not seem to be stereotypical except for his leg, his parrot, and his dishonesty and violent nature. He is unstereotypical in that he is intelligent and educated, he's wise in finances, and he was a good innkeeper, a hardworking cook, and kind to Jim.
11. a. literally: to be fed, housed, and treated like a dog; understood: I made life difficult for the boy. b. literally: this makes little sense since paint is inanimate; understood: well-presented or handsome, as if newly painted, also seems to include the connotation of clever. c. literally: Dick was a geometric shape with four equal sides and four right angles, or Dick was at right angles; understood: Dick was in agreement with them or trustworthy and true. d. literally: Long John's eyes were on fire; understood: Long John's eyes gleamed with excitement.

##### Dig Deeper:

12. Squire Trelawney told everyone they were going to look for treasure, so all of Long John Silver's crew knew. These verses tell us that we seem wise and discerning if we are silent, and there is a time to be silent. If you use discretion, it will protect you. If Trelawney had kept silent, Long John Silver would not have volunteered to go and brought along a mutinous crew of pirates.
13. These verses tell us that successful plans are made with advisors, and we should accept advice and instruction because it makes us wiser. Jim finds out important information and immediately goes to older and wiser men seeking advice and bringing them information so they can make wise plans.