

## Discussion and Activity Guide

# *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz*

by Gennifer Choldenko

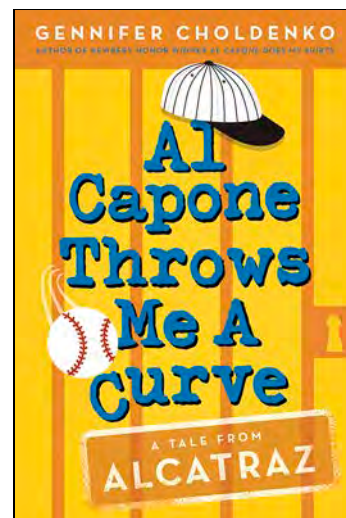
### PUBLISHER'S DESCRIPTION (FROM THE BOOK JACKET)

"1936. Alcatraz. The roughest hard-time prison in America. No one ever escapes. Not even prisoner #85: Al Capone, the most dangerous criminal in the country.

Moose Flanagan's father is the assistant warden, so his family lives on the island. It's the summer before he starts high school, and Moose is trying hard to get on the baseball team. The captain wants something from Alcatraz, and if Moose can get it, he and his best friend will make the team. The problem? The captain's demand is impossible.

Meanwhile, Moose must keep an eye on his fragile older sister, Natalie, as well as the warden's danger-loving daughter, Piper. He winds up in a terrible jam, and the only way out is terrifying. Moose has to learn to stand up to people: His parents. The warden. Even Al Capone.

Then, Moose gets the pitch of a lifetime and delivers a hit no one on Alcatraz will ever forget."



### ABOUT GENNIFER CHOLDENKO

Gennifer Choldenko has published fifteen books for children that have earned many awards, including the CLA Focal Award for *Chasing Secrets*, as well as the Newbery Honor, the California Young Readers Medal, and The Garden State and Keystone State Children's Choice Awards for the *New York Times* bestselling *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Her historical fiction series, *Tales from Alcatraz*, has sold more than 2 million copies. Gennifer's newest novel, *One Third Nerd*, illustrated by Eglantine Ceulemans, is Gennifer's funniest novel yet. Her next historical fiction novel, *Orphan Eleven*, will be out in 2020. Gennifer's books have been translated into thirteen languages. Her mentor is her editor, the astute and gracious Wendy Lamb.



Gennifer loves reading now, just as she did when she was a kid. As a child she looked forward to field trips to Pickwick Books in Hollywood (she grew up in Los Angeles and now lives in San Francisco), being read to by her older sister, the day the Scholastic book order came to school, the smell of the pages of new books, and the antique volumes in her father's library.

Some of her favorite books are: *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams Garcia, *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness, and *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani.

## ADDITIONAL BOOKS BY GENNIFER CHOLDENKO

*Moonstruck: The True Story of How the Cow Jumped over the Moon* (1997) – Picture Book

*Notes from a Liar and Her Dog* (2001) - Novel

*Al Capone Does My Shirts: A Tale from Alcatraz* (2004) - Novel

*How to Make Friends with a Giant* (2006) – Picture Book

*If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period* (2007) - Novel

*Louder, Lili* (2007) – Picture Book

*Al Capone Shines My Shoes: A Tale from Alcatraz* (2009) - Novel

*A Giant Crush* (2011) – Picture Book

*Guys Read: The Snake Mafia* (2011) – Short Story

*No Passengers Beyond This Point* (2011) - Novel

*Al Capone Does My Homework: A Tale from Alcatraz* (2013) - Novel

*Chasing Secrets: A Deadly Surprise in a City of Lies* (2015) - Novel

*Putting the Monkeys to Bed* (2015) – Picture Book

*Dad and the Dinosaur* (2017) – Picture Book

*One-Third Nerd* (2019) – Novel

*Orphan Eleven* (coming out in 2020) – Novel



For more information, explore [Gennifer Choldenko's website](#).

Follow her on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (@Choldenko).

**A NOTE TO TEACHERS:** The following questions and activities support the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.



**BEFORE YOU READ (ALL MENTIONS OF PAGE NUMBERS REFER TO THE HARDCOVER BOOK)**

1. Begin your reading of *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz* by checking out the **cover**, both inside and out. Based on what you see and read on the cover, what are your expectations about the book before you begin reading?
2. Respond to the **title** of the book. Have you ever heard of “Al Capone” or “Alcatraz”? Share what you think you know about them with the rest of the group.

3. Note that Gennifer Choldenko dedicates the book “To every kid who has a sibling with **autism.**” Then turn to page 225 and read the section entitled, “Natalie,” where Choldenko talks about her sister, Gina, who was the inspiration for one of the characters in the book. What do you know about **autism spectrum disorders**?



4. Locate California on a **map** of the United States. Zero in on California, and the San Francisco Bay area, and then find Alcatraz Island. (at right, California map from [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com) and the San Francisco map is from [surewhynotnow.blogspot.com](http://surewhynotnow.blogspot.com))

5. Now study the 1936 **photo/map** of Alcatraz Island found at the beginning of the book. Search for vintage photos of Alcatraz in the mid-1930’s. Then search for contemporary photos of the island and prison. Compare the two. Do you think this seems like a good place to build a prison? Why or why not?



Alcatraz (under Creative Commons license, Attribute:ShareAlike)

6. *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* is considered a work of **fiction**, specifically **historical fiction**. Define “fiction” and “historical fiction.”
7. Authors of **historical fiction** must do careful **research** in order to create an authentic time and place. Watch the following video, where Gennifer Choldenko discusses her research process for the *Tales from Alcatraz* books: [www.alcaponedoesmyshirts.com](http://www.alcaponedoesmyshirts.com). What were some of Choldenko’s research methods and resources? As you read, look for details and examples that demonstrate Choldenko’s excellent research skills.

8. What is the difference between a **primary** and **secondary resource**? Give examples of both primary and secondary resources that Choldenko used in her research for the series, based on what she tells you in the video. For at least one of each type of resource, analyze the quality and reliability of that resource. For instance, for a website, you could consult the “About Us” section to determine who put the website together and any biases they may have. Take a look at this short article about evaluating a website: [www.educatorstechnology.com](http://www.educatorstechnology.com).
9. Look over the **vocabulary** list attached to this guide. Quickly circle the words that are familiar to you.

**AS YOU READ: THINK, DISCUSS, DO**

1. Since this is a work of **historical fiction**, you might be unfamiliar with some of the people, places, and topics covered here. To better understand the times in which *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* takes place, choose one of the topics below to explore further. Look for credible sources on the subject such as [www.alcatrazhistory.com](http://www.alcatrazhistory.com) (rather than Wikipedia). Prepare a brief presentation for the group on this topic.



Hooverville • John Dillinger • Bonnie and Clyde (all images are Creative Commons from Wikimedia)

- The Great Depression
- J. Edgar Hoover
- San Francisco and San Francisco Bay
- Alcatraz Island
- Al Capone (who was incarcerated at Alcatraz from August of 1934 until January of 1939)
- Chicago, Illinois – particularly as it relates to crime, the mob, and Al Capone
- Alcatraz warden, James A. Johnston
- The Chicago Cubs
- Wrigley Field
- Comiskey Park
- Babe Ruth
- Herb Pennock

- San Quentin State Prison
- The Alcatraz prison strike of 1936
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Autism spectrum disorders
- The Dust Bowl of Oklahoma
- Controversies surrounding the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany
- Adolf Hitler in the 1930's
- Machine Gun Kelly
- John Dillinger
- Bonnie and Clyde
- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Hooverilles
- Radio in the 1930's
- Radio and film actor, Tom Mix

2. Gennifer Choldenko uses strong word choices to tell this story. As you read, you may find words that you are unfamiliar with. For instance, on page 2 Moose tells us, "My father's hand **hovers** over Natalie's toothpicks. 'Okay if I take one?' Natalie hands him the last one in line." On page 4 he says, "Outside, I **trudge** past the guard tower, which is a tiny room on three-story-tall legs." Do you know the meaning of the words "**hovers**" and "**trudge**"? There are several things that you can do to help yourself figure out what a word means as you read.

- ▶ You can prepare yourself for what you are going to read by doing some background work before you begin, as you did in the "Before you Read" section above. You know from your preparation that *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* takes place on an island. So, when the main character says on page 1, "No tests. No homework. No getting up early to catch the **ferry**," you can probably figure out that a "**ferry**" is a boat.
- ▶ You can look at the **context** (the words and sentences around the word) in which the word is used. On page 2, the word "**promoted**" is used. If you read the sentences around the word, "Anyhow, the only job my father could get was as a guard and an electrician in the prison. Everybody likes him here, so he got **promoted** to assistant warden," you can probably figure out that "**promoted**" means to move up or advance to something better.
- ▶ You can look at features on the page like pictures, chapter titles, charts, etc., to give you clues to what the word means. Does the title of Chapter 1, "Potty-Training a Snake" give you any clues about what the warden means when he says that his daughter is a "**handful**"?
- ▶ You can look at the parts of the word. For instance, the word "**unpredictable**" is used on page 13. You can break this word into four parts: UN, PRE, DICT, and ABLE. You probably know that "un" means "not," "pre" means "beforehand," and "dict" means "said." So, something that is "**unpredictable**" is "not able to be said or known beforehand."
- ▶ You can substitute the word you don't know with another word to see if it makes sense.

- ▶ You can ask yourself if the word has more than one meaning. For instance, on page 24 Moose tells us, “I **stew** about this all the way to school and throughout my morning classes.” You might know that “**stew**” is “a dish of meat and vegetables cooked slowly in a closed dish or pan.” ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) However, this definition does not make sense in the sentence, so you need to find another definition for “**stew**.”
- ▶ You can look the word up in a **dictionary**. If you look up the word “**stew**” in the dictionary, you will also find that it means, “a state of great anxiety or agitation...panic...fuss...” ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) This makes more sense in the above sentence.

Choose ten **vocabulary words** from the vocabulary list provided that you did **not** circle when you went through the list before reading the book. Figure out each word’s meaning using one of the methods above. Record the word, the method you used to figure out what it means, and the definition on a separate sheet of paper to turn in once you have finished reading the novel.

3. *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* is written in **first person major point of view**. This means that a major character tells the reader the story using words like “I,” “me,” and “my.” Who tells this story? How do you know? As you read, ask yourself if this character is the best person to tell this story. How would the story be different if another character told it? (**Extra credit:** You might even like to try to write a chapter from another character’s viewpoint.)
4. As you begin reading the novel, think about the **setting** of the book, where and when the story takes place. Describe the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings found on Alcatraz Island. What makes this setting unique and different from other books that you have read?

On page 5, Moose tells us that, “Since a convict stabbed my father a few months ago, I haven’t thought it was so great to live on an island with a bunch of murderers...after your father almost dies, you don’t look at stuff the same way anymore.” Do you think that Alcatraz is a safe place for the prison staff and their families? Look for clues.

5. When an author gives readers clues or hints as to what might happen later in the story to keep the reader interested and reading, it is called “**foreshadowing**.” Moose and his friends have invented a new game called “Escape from Alcatraz,” in which one of the prisoners, Fastball, shows an interest. Could this be an example of foreshadowing? Explain. What about on page 63 when Fastball asks Moose, “If something happens to me, will you take care of Bug?” Look for more examples of foreshadowing as you read. How do these examples of foreshadowing affect you as a reader?
6. A “**dilemma**” is “a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially equally undesirable ones.” ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) What does the warden ask Moose to do in Chapter 1? In what ways is this a dilemma, an impossible situation, for Moose? Moose is faced with many dilemmas throughout *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*. Give additional examples. How does he deal with these dilemmas and what do his actions tell us about his character?
7. On page 10, Moose watches as the warden, “...picks up a shiny, sharp letter opener and begins slicing open envelopes. Zrip, zreep, zrip – the paper tears along the crease.” In this description, the author has used examples of both **alliteration** (repeating the same sound at the beginning of words close together in a sentence) and **onomatopoeia** (words that sound like the thing they describe). Find examples of each in the quote above. Look for more examples as you continue reading *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*.

8. Though we don't actually meet the character of **Piper** until page 17, we hear a lot about her. What are your impressions of her before we meet her? After we meet her in Chapter 2, what do you think of her? Why? What do you predict she might do in the story?
9. If you read carefully, you will see that author Gennifer Choldenko uses lots of wonderful **imagery** in *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* to help us really see, feel, hear, and taste what Moose is experiencing. Imagery includes:
- ▶ **similes**—using the words “like” and “as” to compare two things (On page 11, Moose says, “When I get off the ferry after school, the water is green, like unwashed teeth . . .” The color of the water is compared to the color of dirty teeth.)
  - ▶ **metaphors**—suggesting that two things are alike without using the words “like” or “as” (On page 11, the wind is compared to a wall when Moose says, “a wall of wind hits me.”)
  - ▶ **personification**—giving human qualities to something that is not human (On page 6, Moose tells us that “The prison yard knows everything.” The prison yard is given the human quality of knowing something.)
  - ▶ **sensory language**—using strong word choice to tell us how something smells, tastes, feel, sounds, etc. (In the first paragraph of Chapter 2, Alcatraz Island is described in this way: “I hold my cap on, breathing in the smell of the dock: rotting wood and old fish. A seal barks in the distance. I look for his black head in the tossing, turning bay.”) Can you find an example of **alliteration** in this quote as well?

There are many, many examples of each of these forms of imagery to be found in the novel. Share more examples with your group.

10. Give examples of how Moose and Scout attempt to **impress** Beck, the captain of the high school baseball team, in Chapter 3. What is their goal? Do you think that their attempts will get them what they want? Do you think they might end up regretting any of these things in the end? Look for more examples as you read further. Explain. Have you ever done anything to impress someone that you later regretted? Discuss.
11. In Chapter 4, Moose comes home from school to find his **mom** in bed with a headache. He knows, “My mom gets a headache when things aren't going well with Natalie.” (p. 33) What do you think she is upset about specifically? Are you able to tell when your parents are upset? How? Be specific.
12. Think about the character of Moose's sister, Natalie. What are your impressions of her so far? Explain. Though the word “**autism**” was not used widely until the 1940's ([projectautism.org](http://projectautism.org)), which is after *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* takes place, Natalie has characteristics of someone with an **autism spectrum disorder**. Read one of these brief articles about this disorder: ([kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org) or [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org) or [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)), and take a look at the information about autism spectrum disorders found on Gennifer Choldenko's website: [www.alcaponedoesmyshirts.com](http://www.alcaponedoesmyshirts.com). What characteristics does Natalie have that might indicate that she has an autism spectrum disorder? Give specific examples. In what ways does this disorder make Natalie **vulnerable** (put her in danger)? For instance, on page 36, Moose tells us, “Anything bad happens, people blame her. My dad says it's because people don't grasp the way she thinks. He says people villainize what they don't understand.” Discuss this statement. How does this impact the people around Natalie, especially Moose?
13. Look up the definition of the word “**redeem**.” Does Piper need to redeem herself for her past actions, particularly the “counterfeiting scheme”? Give suggestions for things that she could do to accomplish this. Can you think of a time when you needed to redeem yourself at home or school? What happened? Discuss.



14. One of the techniques that author Gennifer Choldenko uses to bring the time and place to life for the reader is called an “**idiom**.” Idioms are defined at [yourdictionary.com](http://yourdictionary.com) as “...words that have a different figurative meaning than the literal meanings of each word or phrase. They can be confusing for kids or people learning a language as they don’t mean what they say.” For instance, you may have heard the expression, “It’s a piece of cake.” This idiom means that something is easy to accomplish, not that something is a delicious sweet treat.

On page 47, idioms that were used in the mid 1930’s (and still today), “pitches a fit” and “roll with the punches,” are used. Can you figure out what they mean? Identify more idioms used in *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* as you continue reading.

15. Describe Natalie’s **appearance**. Why do you think that Mrs. Flanagan dresses Natalie in clothes that seem too young for a 17-year-old? Why does she seem to not want Natalie to grow up?

How does Bea Trixle feel about Natalie’s appearance? Describe what she gives Natalie for her birthday. Why do you think that she gives her these gifts? How do Moose and Mr. and Mrs. Flanagan feel about Natalie’s new look? Do you feel that this is an appropriate look for Natalie? Explain.

Do you ever feel that your parents don’t want you to grow up? Do they ever withhold privileges that you think that you are old enough to have? Give examples.

16. Moose talks about his **father** on page 58. He says, “My father’s voice is warm. He doesn’t fake being nice; he finds something he genuinely likes about every person.” On page 142, he tells us, “There’s something about my father that brings us together. When he’s gone, Nat, my mother, and me are people who love each other. When he’s home, we’re a family.” Look for more clues from Moose and other characters in the story that tell us about the kind of man Cam Flanagan is. Discuss.



17. On page 59 we learn about “**the rule of silence**” at the prison. What is this? How do the prisoners feel about this rule? Mr. Flanagan? Warden Williams? Other characters? Who do you agree with? Why? What are the pros and cons of the rule of silence?

Give more examples of how the prison on Alcatraz Island is run. Think about the **correctional system** and **prisons** then and now. (Check out this website on the history of Alcatraz Island: [www.american-historama.org](http://www.american-historama.org). See if you can find more about the rules of the prison.) Is the purpose of the prison system to **punish** or to **rehabilitate** (look these words up if you are not sure what they mean)? Discuss. Think again about the prisoners we meet on Alcatraz Island. Does it seem like prison is punishing or rehabilitating these men from their life of crime?

Piper says on page 62, “How many times do I have to tell you, Moose, prison is not fair...” Is prison fair? Should it be? Give examples.

18. How do Dewey, Beck, Passerini, Scout, and Moose each respond at baseball practice when **Natalie**, “...is running her hands over her hair. Her lips are puckered up, and she’s making smacking sounds”? (p. 74) Why do each of the characters respond as they do, and what does it tell us about each of them? What do



you think is happening here with Natalie? Where do you think that she has seen and learned this behavior?

19. Moose and Natalie are **brother and sister**. Describe their **relationship**. For instance, Moose tells us, "Sometimes telling things to Natalie is easier than telling them to anyone else. She doesn't make suggestions about what I should do. She just listens." In what ways is their relationship more complicated than a typical sibling relationship?
20. What does Piper see in the window of the photographer's studio? How does she respond when she sees it? What do you think this tells us about Piper and her relationship with her **family**? Compare and contrast her relationship with her family to that of Moose and his family.
21. What **item** does Natalie bring to baseball practice in her purse? Why? What do you predict will happen with this item? What actually happens, and what are the consequences for Moose, his father, and Natalie as the story continues?
22. Think about the character of **Moose**. He says on page 132, "Why is it always me? It's been like this my whole life. I know I'm the healthy one. The lucky one. The strong one. But does that mean I always have to take the hit?" Discuss this statement. Give examples from *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* in which Moose "takes the hit" for someone else. What does this tell us about Moose's character?

On page 134, Bomini says, "You've always had a good attitude. One of the things I like about you Moose..." Throughout the story, what do others say about Moose, and how do they act towards him? What do we know about Moose by the end of the book?

23. What does Moose find while on trash duty? He thinks, "...who would throw something like this away? And how did it get in the cell house in the first place? Who owns it now? If it's in the trash, can I take it? Is it stealing to take trash?" In what ways is this an example of a **dilemma**? How do you think this item got there? (Think again about the title of the book.) What does Moose decide to do? Do you think he does the right thing? Explain.
24. In Chapter 19, Piper sends a note to Moose that says, "I wanted you to know that your sister and I are working together on a project that I think you'll find interesting. Very interesting." What do you predict they are working on? In what ways could this be an example of **foreshadowing**? What do we eventually find out that they have been working on together? How do Moose and his family feel about this? How does Natalie end up benefitting from this? In what ways does this end up being part of Piper's **redemption**?
25. Discuss the character of **Bea Trixle**. What do you think motivates her to do the things that she does? Watch this short video that explains what a **protagonist** and an **antagonist** in a story are: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). If a protagonist is a main character who has "good guy" qualities, and an antagonist is a character who has "bad guy" qualities, which is Bea Trixle? Could you make a case that she is actually both? Explain and give examples.
26. A **cliffhanger ending** is, "...a sudden abrupt ending to a plot. There is not a resolution to the problem—the reader is left hanging. Writers often end chapters in a book with a **cliffhanger**—the reader must read the next chapter to find out what happens to resolve a tense situation." (from: [www.softschools.com](http://www.softschools.com)) Several chapters in *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*, especially towards the end of the book, end in cliffhangers. For instance, how does Chapter 22 end? Why could this be considered a cliffhanger? Give additional examples of cliffhangers found in the book. How do these cliffhangers impact you as a reader?

Think about other ways in which author Gennifer Choldenko builds the action of this story. Discuss things like **foreshadowing**, surprises, short chapters and sentences, etc.

27. In Chapter 28, Moose finally meets up with Al Capone. What do they talk about? Reread page 186. What **advice** does Al Capone give to Moose? Does Moose end up following this advice? Explain. What are the consequences? What does Moose end up learning from this, both about himself and the world in general?
28. Are any Alcatraz prisoners trustworthy? Give examples from *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*. Think about the characters of Fastball, Capone, and Fat Fogerty. For instance, when Moose is trying to get Natalie and himself out of the prison cell house, do any prisoners help? What does this tell us about at least some of the prisoners on Alcatraz Island?
29. Describe the character of **Fastball**. Based on what he says and does throughout *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*, and based on what others say about him, what do you know about his character?

Moose tells us that no prisoners were ever released from Alcatraz Island. However, Fastball is an exception. As Moose watches on the day of Fastball's release, he asks many good questions, "A man taking his first free steps isn't a sight you see every day...What's it feel like to walk out of prison? Where do you go? How do you get money? How do you convince a landlord to take a chance on you? How do you get a job when so many men who haven't committed crimes are out of work?" Discuss these questions.

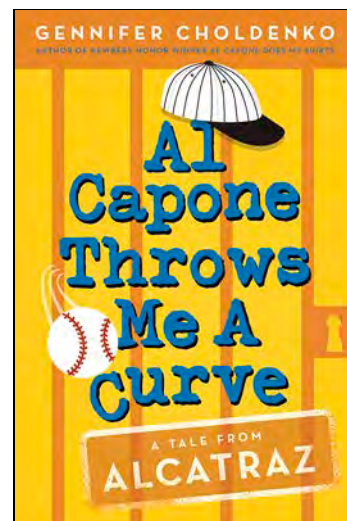
Refer back to question #17. Do you believe that Fastball has been **rehabilitated**? How do you predict he will do once he is released from prison?

What do you think of Natalie's list of "**How to Be Free**" rules, which she gives to Fastball as he is leaving? What does Moose add to the list? Would you add anything to the list? Could these rules be useful in all of our lives? Explain.

30. *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* ends with another **good-bye**. Describe what happens. Do you think that this is a good outcome? Why or why not? How are Moose, Natalie, Cam, and Helen Flanagan all impacted by this good-bye? What will it mean in each of their lives?

### AFTER YOU READ

1. Re-examine the **cover** of *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz*. Based on your reading, do you feel that the cover will draw potential readers to the book and adequately prepare them for what is to come?
2. Reconsider the **title** of the book: *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz*. Do you think that it is a title that adequately prepares the reader for what is to come and draws him or her in? Explain your answer.
3. Now that you have read the novel, what do you think about the quality of author Gennifer Choldenko's **research**? Why and how is her research important, especially since it is a work of **historical fiction**?



4. When a book is published, professional journals provide editorial **reviews** to help readers determine if they may wish to read and/or to purchase that particular book. Find a professional, editorial review of *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz* (published in a credible journal such as *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, etc.). Note that these reviews generally include:

- a brief summary of the book (without giving too much away)
- who the book might be appropriate for
- how the book is packaged and how the material is presented
- comments about the quality of the writing of the book
- an overall thumbs up or thumbs down for the book (books given “starred” reviews are seen as exceptional)

Discuss with your group whether you agree or disagree with the professional assessment of this book. Then write your own review of *Al Capone Throws me a Curve: A Tale from Alcatraz*. Be sure to include the elements listed above.

### EXPLORE FURTHER

1. Be sure to check out Gennifer Choldenko’s “Author’s Note” at the back of the book for more information about several subjects covered in the book.
2. You will find additional information about the book at Gennifer Choldenko’s website: [www.gennifercholdenko.com](http://www.gennifercholdenko.com)
3. If you are interested in reading more about Moose Flanagan and the other characters in *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*, take a look at the first three books in the *A Tale from Alcatraz* series:



4. If you are interested in finding out more about Alcatraz Island, explore [www.alcatrazhistory.com](http://www.alcatrazhistory.com) and [www.american-historama.org](http://www.american-historama.org).

## VOCABULARY for *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve* (page 1)

\*Please note that many of these words are used several times throughout the book.

\*Teachers – this is by no means an exhaustive list. There are MANY additional potential vocabulary words found in the pages of *Al Capone Throws Me a Curve*. The words below were chosen to demonstrate the strategies for figuring out what a word means found above.

### Chapter 1

1. ferry (p. 1)
2. restricted (p. 1)
3. hovers (p. 2)
4. promoted (p. 2)
5. trudge (p. 4)

### Chapter 2

1. unpredictable (p. 13)
2. pleading (p. 14)
3. solemnly (p. 15)
4. counterfeiting (p. 15)
5. contraband (p. 20)

### Chapter 3

1. stew (p. 24)
2. peddling (p. 24)
3. conspiracy (p. 27)
4. scrutinizes (p. 29)
5. mangle (p. 29)

### Chapter 4

1. fuming (p. 32)
2. restraining (p. 34)
3. promote (p. 35)
4. villainize (p. 36)
5. subside (p. 37)

### Chapter 5

1. racket (p. 44)
2. rifling (p. 44)
3. bustle (p. 44)
4. drones (p. 44)
5. hoarse (p. 46)

### Chapter 6

1. harrumphs (p. 50)
2. sacked (p. 51)
3. gander (p. 52)
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