

POSSESSED by Mahtab Narsimhan

Discussion Questions with Curriculum Links

1. The book explores the Japanese cultural practice of using an Ouija board to summon spirits. Research this tradition and discuss its purpose/significance. (Curriculum links: Social Studies - World Cultures, Anthropology)
2. Describe the characterization of Michiko based on the story. What motivates her desire to use the Ouija board? How would you analyze her personality traits? (Curriculum link: Literary Analysis - Character Development)
3. The friends summon "Kokkuri-san," a trickster spirit. What role do tricksters play in mythology and folklore across various cultures? (Curriculum links: Social Studies - Mythology, Comparative Mythology)
4. Write a descriptive paragraph detailing the setting of the Mojave National Preserve where the friends go on their field trip. Use sensory details to vividly capture the landscape. (Curriculum links: Creative Writing, Geography)
5. Summarize the central conflict or problem that Michiko faces after summoning the spirit. What challenges must she overcome? (Curriculum link: Literary Analysis - Plot/Conflict)
6. As the story progresses, "their friendship is shattered beyond repair." Write a dialogue between Michiko and one of her friends showing the broken dynamic. (Curriculum links: Creative Writing, Dialogue)
7. Michiko learns her mother is seriously ill. How might this familial situation impact her thoughts, emotions and decisions throughout the story? (Curriculum link: Exploring Human Experiences)
8. Research the Japanese cultural concept of the spirit world or realm of the dead that the summoned spirit originates from. How might these beliefs be represented? (Curriculum links: Social Studies - World Cultures/Religions, Research)
9. If you were to stage a scene from the book as a play, what sound effects, lighting, or scenery would you use to create an eerie, suspenseful atmosphere? (Curriculum links: Performing Arts, Technical Theater)
10. What examples of foreshadowing are present in the book that hint at potential dangers or an ominous outcome? Discuss these writing techniques. (Curriculum link: Literary Analysis - Literary Devices)