1. Lines 1–7: What are the different settings that Gilbert is thinking of? What do these settings reveal about Gilbert?
2. Lines 31–44: Who is the main character? What problem is being explained? What evidence in the text reveals Gilbert’s state of mind here and what the other characters may think about him?
3. Lines 82–87: What symbol in these lines suggests the passing of time? What does it reveal about Gilbert?
4. Lines 94–122: What evidence in the text reveals some of Gilbert’s and his father’s character traits?
5. Lines 131–135: Which details reveal one of Gilbert’s motivations?
6. Lines 136–147: How does the author use a simile to reveal the sea as a symbol?
7. Lines 157–171: What references to weather are in these lines? Describe the effect the weather has on the setting and on Gilbert.
8. Lines 211–231: How does the characters’ freedom from adult supervision affect their behavior? How does Gilbert “make the most of” this time in his life?
9. Lines 230–232: How does the author set apart text in this section? What inference about the handcar does this text evidence support?
10. Lines 235–249: How does the author show that the children are determined?
11. Lines 270–284: What is Gilbert’s motivation for bringing each item? Were his motivations purely practical, or did he bring any of the items for sentimental reasons?
12. Lines 304–310: What do Emmy and Gilbert each want at this moment? Explain what this may reveal about the significance of the symbols of the land and the sea in this story.
13. Lines 321–333: How do the settings of the handcar and the sea ahead of them help focus the children’s motivation?
14. Lines 392–407: What effect does the change in setting have on the children? How does each child react? What does that reveal about him or her?
15. Lines 414–421: What does Gilbert do? What does this action reveal about him?