



Discussion Questions

1. Describe this book in five words to a friend and explain your choices.
2. Lily's pa, John, invents incredible mechanical beings and mechanimals. Have you ever wished you could invent something, or had an idea for an invention? What was it?
3. We meet lots of different characters in the book – including mechanical characters, such as Mr Wingnut and Mrs Rust. Thaddeus explains that: “one thing I do know is this...feelings and intuition, love and compassion, those are the things make a soul, not blood and bones or machine parts.” Thinking about the characters in the book, discuss what you think this quotation means with a friend. Do you think these mechanicals have feelings?
4. Peter Bunzl uses lots of technical terms, such as the word “zeppelin”, which is a type of airship. Did you find any unfamiliar words in this novel? Take a look at the “dictionary of curious words” at the back of the book, and write down any others that you weren't sure of before looking them up.
5. Even though Malkin, the mechanical fox, is grumpy and sarcastic, he is still a brilliant friend. If you could have any mechanical animal, what would it be and why?
6. Robert's pa, Thaddeus, tells his son: “No one conquers fear easily, Robert. It takes a brave heart to win great battles.” Can you pick out two events in the book where a character has to overcome a fear or worry? Think about a time that you conquered fear – what happened? How did you tackle your fear?
7. We discover at the end that Professor Silverfish is an enemy, rather than a friend. Did this come as a shock to you? Can you find any passages or hints in the text that Professor Silverfish might not be as trustworthy as Lily thinks he is?
8. *Cogheart* is written in the third person narrative. Discuss how the story might have been different if it had been told in the first person – from Lily's or Robert's, or even Malkin's point of view. What do you think we might have learnt or seen?
9. Mrs Rust loves using exciting exclamations with a mechanical feel, such as “Cog-wheels and coat hangers!” and “Stopwatches and spinning tops!” Can you think of any of your own?
10. Think about the title, “Cogheart”. What did you think it meant before you started reading the book? Can you suggest any alternatives? **Exercise:** Draw or explain the cover for your alternative title.
11. **Exercise:** Write an article for *The Daily Cog*. Think about the story of how Lily comes to have the cogheart. Could you come up with a headline and an article that tells this incredible story?