

Discussion points for *'Time Travelling with a Hamster'* by Ross Welford

Please see discussion notes below.

These are to encourage teacher / librarian / book club leader/ and student discussion.

1. Thinking about time travel, Al suggests *'the possibilities are endless. Just think of the misery that could be stopped, the accidents prevented, if I had the courage to travel back in time'*. If you were able, what one thing would you change in your own family's history or in history in general?
2. How important is Al's pet hamster Alan Shearer to the story?
3. Because Pye, Al's dad, desperately wants to undo the accident that results in a killer piece of metal in his brain, he asks Al to *'use my device – follow the instructions incredibly carefully – and prevent me from having that accident'*. Do you think this is an ok request for a dad to make of his twelve year old son? Give reason(s) for your reply.
4. Which character in the novel do you like the least and why?
5. Grandpa Byron says it is *'difficult to understand as to why you would risk everything on this ludicrous adventure of your father's'*. Why is he so against time travelling?
6. On a number of occasions when Al is faced with really dark moments he cries. The idea that boys don't cry still flourishes in some people's mind. What is your view?
7. Despite some lying, break-ins and thefts, plus setting fire to a school, is Al a good role model for young readers? Why do think this?
8. The reader's imagination is completely captured by Al's epic experiences. Discuss the pros and cons of whether the story would transfer well into film? Which incident or incidents would provide the highlights?
9. Do you think Grandpa's advice *'Live life so completely that when death comes to you like a thief in the night, there will be nothing left for him to steal'* How would you translate this and do you think that this is good advice?
10. What message, if any, do you take from this book?