

SURVIVAL IS INSUFFICIENT

TEACHER'S GUIDE

2015 - 2016

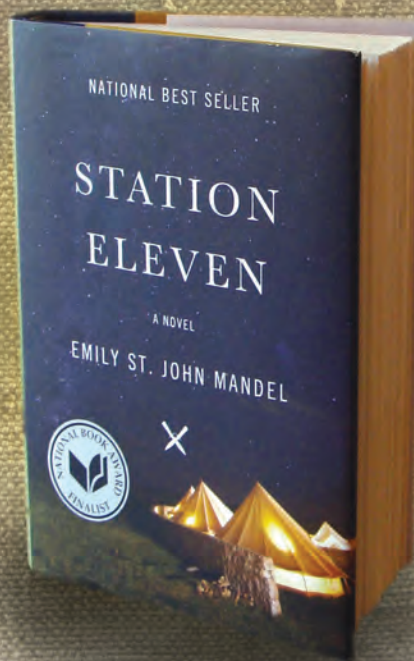
MICHIGAN  
HUMANITIES  
COUNCIL

GREAT  
MICHIGAN  
READ



**Station Eleven**

*Emily St. John Mandel*







# WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN READ?

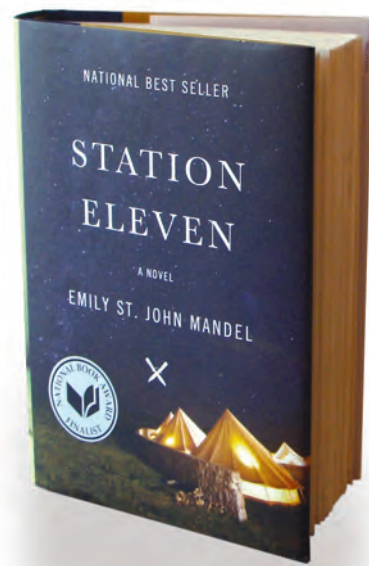
**Great Michigan Read: One title, one state, and thousands engaged in literary discussion**

## WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN READ?

The Michigan Humanities Council's Great Michigan Read is a book club for the entire state with a focus on a single book – *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. The program is intended for young adults to senior citizens with broad goals of making literature more accessible and appealing while also encouraging residents to learn more about our state and individual identities.

## STATION ELEVEN BY EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL

One wintry night in Toronto, Jeevan Chaudhary attends a performance of *King Lear*. The lead is played by Arthur Leander, a famous actor who has a heart attack onstage during his performance. Jeevan realizes what is happening and attempts to save Arthur's life. Unsettled by the event and his lack of success, Jeevan walks home only to learn that a terrible flu pandemic is quickly spreading across North America. Moving back and forth between life before the pandemic and life afterward, *Station Eleven* presents the story about several who were involved on the Toronto stage that night and slowly unravels the strands that connect them all. As the next generation struggles to survive, a band of traveling performers emerges while a line from an episode of *Star Trek* ("Because survival is insufficient") serves as their motto and guides them through the changed world.



### STATION ELEVEN

*My fourth novel is about a traveling Shakespearean theatre company in a post-apocalyptic North America. It's also about friendship, memory, love, celebrity, our obsession with objects, oppressive dinner parties, comic books, and knife-throwing.*

Emily St. John Mandel



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# STATION ELEVEN AND AUTHOR EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL



Emily St. John Mandel. ©Dese Rae L. Stage

**EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL** was born and raised on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada. She studied contemporary dance at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre and lived briefly in Montreal before relocating to New York.

Her fourth novel, *Station Eleven*, was a 2014 National Book Award Finalist, a 2015 Michigan Notable Book, and winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award. All four of her novels were Indie Next Picks, and *The Singer's Gun* was the 2014 winner of the Prix Mystere de la Critique in France. Her short fiction and essays have been anthologized in numerous collections, including Best American Mystery Stories 2013. She is a staff writer for The Millions, and she lives in New York City with her husband.

### Also by Emily St. John Mandel

- The Lola Quartet (2012)*
- The Singer's Gun (2010)*
- Last Night in Montreal (2009)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL PLEASE VISIT:  
[www.prhspeakers.com](http://www.prhspeakers.com)  
[www.emilymandel.com](http://www.emilymandel.com)

# Q&A WITH EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL

## How did you approach writing *Station Eleven*?

I started with the idea of an actor dying of a heart attack during the mad scene in *King Lear*, in more or less the present day. At the same time, I realized early on that I wanted to write about a traveling company of musicians and actors moving over a post-apocalyptic landscape. So from the beginning, I had the idea of writing a novel with two narrative strands, one set in the present and one in a post-apocalyptic future, and constructing a book where the action would move back and forth between them. After that, as with any book, it's just a question of relentless hard work. I wrote and revised the novel over a period of two and a half years or so.

## Why a post-apocalyptic novel?

I wanted to write about the modern world, about this extraordinary time in which we find ourselves and all of these spectacular things that we take for granted—the supercomputers in our pockets that send signals to the satellites, the airplanes, the way hot water comes out of faucets, and rooms light up when you flick a switch on the wall. There are obviously a

great many things about our world that are completely awful, but we are surrounded by a level of technology and infrastructure that at any other point in human history would have seemed miraculous. One way to write about its absence, of course, is to write about something, of course, is to write about its absence, so I thought that an interesting way to write about the modern world would be to write about a time when the modern world has fallen away. This novel is often marketed and described as being post-apocalyptic, and that's not inaccurate, but about half of it is set in the present day, and I think of the book as a love letter to the modern world.

## What is the story's most compelling lesson for today?

I didn't write the book with the intention of conveying any specific message or lesson to readers. My goal was just to write the best novel that I possibly could. The writer and critic Edmund Wilson once wrote that no two people read the same book, and I think he was right about that. Different people can often come away from the same book with very different impressions. I think it's not the author's place to try to impose a single meaning or lesson on readers.

**“There are obviously a great many things about our world that are completely awful, but we are surrounded by a level of technology and infrastructure that at any other point in human history would have seemed miraculous.”**

EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL





# CONTENT & STRUCTURE

The text complexity of *Station Eleven* is challenging yet accessible for upper elementary and secondary students.

## TEACHING IDEAS: MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The plot, setting, and themes within *Station Eleven* easily lend themselves to a multi-disciplinary teaching approach that encompasses topics from science, history, and social studies. Each of the following approaches begins with an essential question, which is based on a theme from the novel. As students attempt to answer the questions, they will build and strengthen English Language Arts skills (tied to the Common Core State Standards "CCSS"), as well as discuss and discover multiple themes and ethical scenarios applicable to both the novel and real life.

### THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF STATION ELEVEN SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING GOALS >

**"Station Eleven will change the post-apocalyptic genre... This isn't a story about survival, it's a story about living."**

ANDREW BLOM, *BOSTON HERALD*

# 1.



### Michigan English Language Arts Content Expectations Goal:

To give students the opportunity to help develop personal, social, occupational, and civic literacy (MDE 2006).

# 2.



### Michigan Social Studies Content Expectations Goal:

To give students the opportunity to display social understanding and civic efficacy (MDE 2007).

# 3.



### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Goal:

To help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school (CCSSO 2010).

# 4.



### College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards Goal:

To create knowledgeable, thinking, and active citizens who are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good (CCSSO 2013).



# PRE-READING

There are several ways to activate background knowledge (schema) and create personal connections such as completing sentence stems for younger readers or by asking questions for more experienced readers.

### PRE-READING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Engaging in pre-reading activities allows students to establish focus and motivation for reading. There are several ways to activate background knowledge (schema) and create personal connections such as completing sentence stems for younger readers or by asking questions for more experienced readers. Other effective pre-reading activities include: *Station Eleven* introductory documentary, K-W-L, LINK, open book reading assessment (OBRA), Internet scavenger hunts, prediction and vocabulary building protocols, and more.

Engaging in pre-reading activities allows students to establish focus and motivation for reading.

### Activity Ideas:

1. **Completing Sentence Stems for Younger Readers**
2. **Asking Questions for More Experienced Readers**
3. ***Station Eleven* Introductory Documentary**
4. **K-W-L (*Know/What/Learn*)**
5. **LINK (*List/Inquire/Note/Know*)**
6. **OBRA (*Open Book Reading Assessment*)**
7. **Internet Scavenger Hunts**
8. **Prediction and Vocabulary Building Protocols**

### SAMPLE PREVIEW STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

I am reading *Station Eleven* because...

Why am I reading *Station Eleven*?

*Station Eleven* relates to me personally because...

How does reading *Station Eleven* relate to me personally?

I will benefit from reading *Station Eleven* because...

How will I benefit from reading *Station Eleven*?

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Schoenbach, Ruth, Cynthia Greenleaf, and Lynn Murphy. *Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: WestEd and Jossey-Bass, 2012.





# ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

## STATION ELEVEN THEMES

### EQ1

P. 7

How does the setting, Michigan and the Great Lakes, contribute to survival? Similarly, how do the Great Lakes contribute to the State of Michigan's health?

### EQ2

P. 8-9

Are the arts truly important to our society? To our identity as human?

### EQ3

P. 10-12

Should the needs of a single person ever outweigh the collective good of a group?

### EQ4

P. 13

Is it important to remember the past? Should we continue to study it? Why or why not?

### EQ5

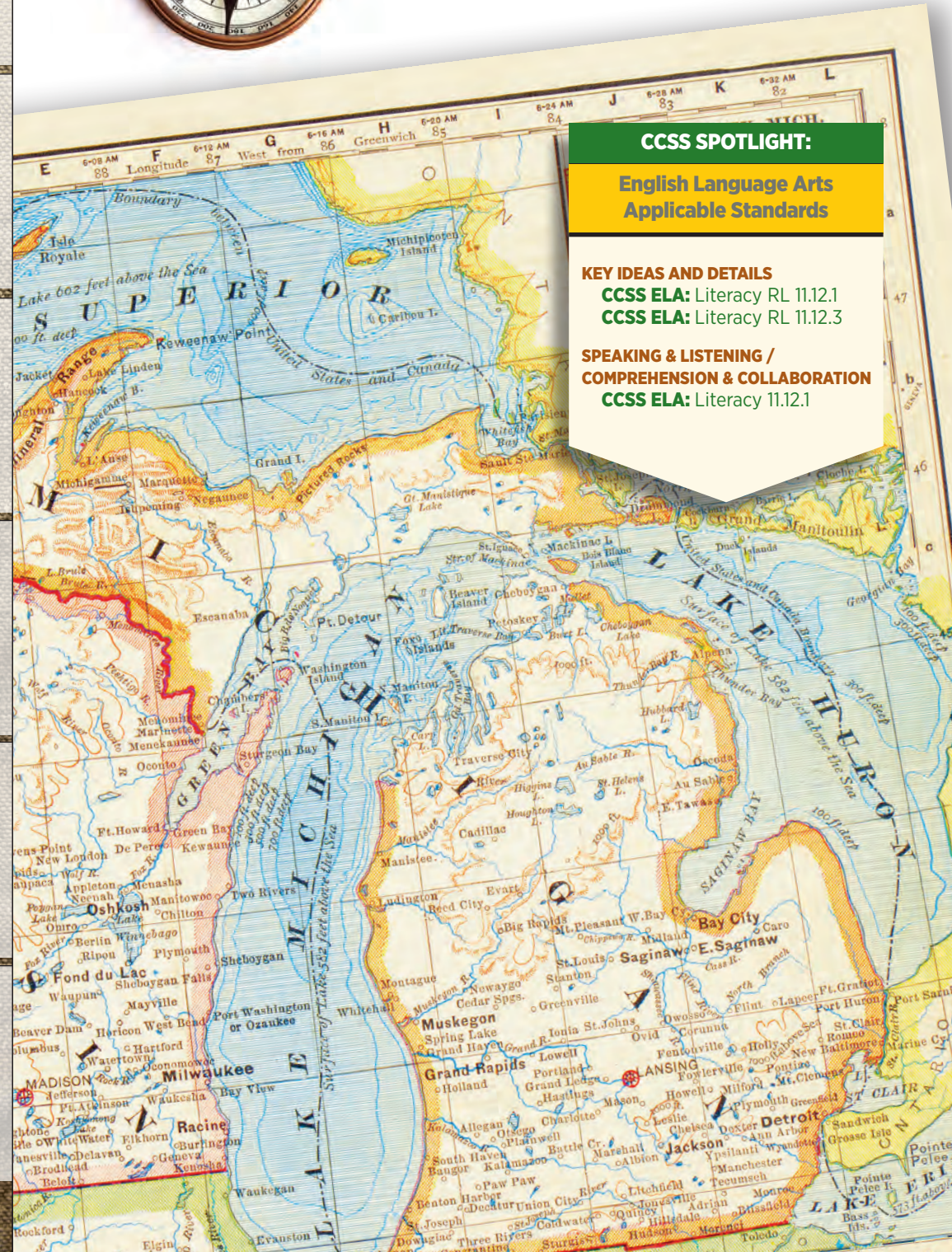
P. 14

A new reality of life after civilization is violence. Is it ever ethical to take another's life?

### EQ6

P. 15

Is *Station Eleven* a literary novel or simply genre fiction? Why does it matter?



**CCSS SPOTLIGHT:**

**English Language Arts  
Applicable Standards**

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

**CCSS ELA:** Literacy RL.11.2.1  
**CCSS ELA:** Literacy RL.11.2.3

**SPEAKING & LISTENING /  
COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION**

**CCSS ELA:** Literacy 11.2.1

# EQ1

How does the setting, Michigan and the Great Lakes, contribute to survival? Similarly, how do the Great Lakes contribute to the State of Michigan's health?

**STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT**

## MICHIGAN AND THE GREAT LAKES AS THE SETTING

The *Traveling Symphony* traces its familiar route around the Great Lake-bordered perimeter of Michigan.

**“Twenty years after the collapse they were still in motion, traveling back and forth along the shores of Lakes Huron and Michigan, west as far as Traverse City, east and north over the 49th parallel to Kincardine. They followed the St. Clair River south to the fishing towns of Marine City and Algonac and back again. This territory was for the most part tranquil now. . .”**  
(p. 37)

- ✗ Why this territory?
- ✗ What about these towns and settlements along the Great Lakes work for the *Traveling Symphony*?
- ✗ How does the geography, and in particular the lakes (Michigan/Huron) contribute to their survival?
- ✗ Who else follows the lake, and does this contribute to his survival as well? (Chapter 36)
- ✗ Severn City, although a fictitious settlement, is somewhere near Lake Michigan (p. 238) and big enough for an airport. Using an actual map of Michigan, where would you place it?







# EQ2

Are the arts truly important to our society?  
To our identity as human?

## STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON SECTION 4 THE STARSHIP & “SURVIVAL IS INSUFFICIENT” OR STAR TREK V. SHAKESPEARE?

We learn why the Traveling Symphony avoids the South (Ohio in particular – Chapter 18) and focuses on its previously traveled routes— because they are generally safer. On these travels, Dieter and Kirsten slip into a familiar conversation after leaving St. Deborah by the Water (which, ironically, was one of their most dangerous towns).

**“All I’m saying,” Dieter said, twelve hours out of St. Deborah by the Water, “is that the quote on the lead caravan would be way more profound if we hadn’t lifted it from *Star Trek*.”**

**“Survival is insufficient:” Kirsten had had these words tattooed on her left forearm at the age of fifteen and had been arguing with Dieter about it almost ever since.”**  
(Chapter 19, p. 119)

To be fair, Dieter and Kirsten are arguing in part about her tattoos, but also about this line from an episode of *Star Trek*.

- ✗ Why do you think the Traveling Symphony chose this line as its motto?
- ✗ Why do you think Kirsten had the line tattooed on her left forearm?
- ✗ Does the motto fit the caravan? Or, does the caravan fit the motto?
- ✗ What about other people in the novel? For instance, consider Frank’s opinion on the matter (Chapter 32). Also, what about the settlement in Severn City? How does it apply?
- ✗ Discuss Dieter’s opinion on the matter. (“See, that illustrates the whole problem,” Dieter said. “The best Shakespearean actress in the territory, and her favorite line of text is from *Star Trek*.” (p. 120)
- ✗ Do you think a Shakespeare quotation would have been more apt? If so, any ideas which play you would begin with and why?

### CCSS SPOTLIGHT:

#### English Language Arts Applicable Standards

#### KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

- CCSS ELA – Literacy RL 11.12.1
- CCSS ELA – Literacy RL 11.12.2
- CCSS ELA – Literacy RL 11.12.3

#### CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

- CCSS ELA – Literacy RL 11.12.4

#### INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

- CCSS ELA – Literacy RL 11.12.7

#### SPEAKING & LISTENING / COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION

- CCSS ELA: Literacy 11.12.1

### SOCIAL/POP CULTURE ASIDE: STAR TREK: VOYAGER OR SHAKESPEARE



Students should watch Season 6 episode 2 (episode 122 overall) entitled *Survivor Instinct* or read a summary of it, available here:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival\\_Instinct\\_%28Star\\_Trek:\\_Voyager%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival_Instinct_%28Star_Trek:_Voyager%29)

At the crux of the episode is a dilemma faced by Seven of Nine upon encountering lost Borg—

**is it better to live a long life as part of a collective group or is it better to live a shorter life solely on individual terms?**

Ask students to do the following:

- ✗ Watch the episode
- ✗ Summarize its basic facts
- ✗ Present the dilemma
- ✗ Explain what Seven chose to do and why... “Because survival is insufficient.”
- ✗ Do they agree or disagree with the decision? Why or why not?
- ✗ Whose position (Kirsten’s or Dieter’s) is stronger in *Station Eleven*? Why?

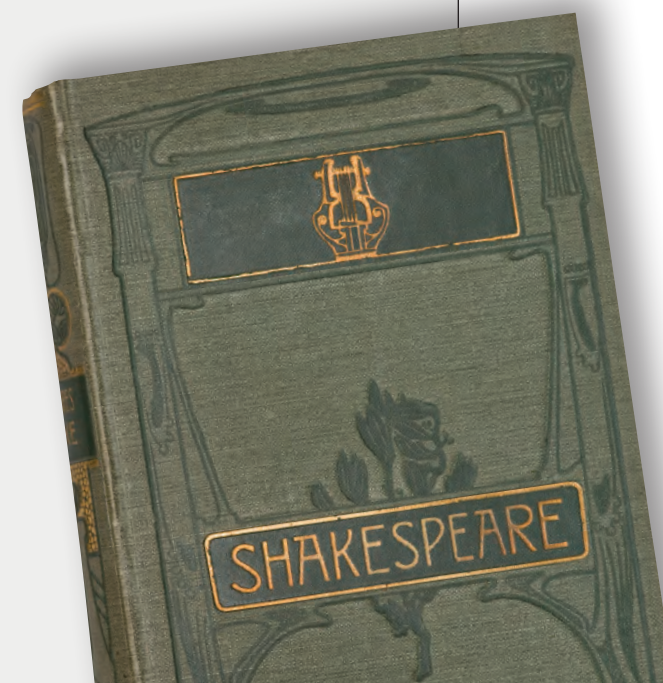
### SHAKESPEARE ASIDE



Photo: Wikimedia Commons, King Lear by Peter F. Rabtheimel, Dayton Art Institute

*Station Eleven* opens with a performance of *King Lear*. Those interested should read Act IV of *King Lear* or watch the movie version.

- ✗ After having seen the episode and/or become familiar with *King Lear* (one of Shakespeare’s most renowned plays), do you agree with Kirsten about the *Star Trek* line or side with Dieter about a Shakespeare line? (Or, perhaps the Clarinet? (See Chapter 49)
- ✗ Can you expand upon the metaphor between Miranda Carroll’s *Station Eleven* comics and life after civilization? Does *Star Trek* fit as well?







# EQ3

Should the needs of a single person ever outweigh the collective good of a group?

## STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON SECTION 6 THE AIRPLANES

Re-read Chapters 39-42 (pp. 206-241). Trace Miranda Carroll's travel beginning in Chapter 39 and finishing in Chapter 41.

- ✕ What cities (and then places within) did she visit?
- ✕ When did she start experiencing symptoms?
- ✕ Based on this, hypothesize about when she became infected.
- ✕ Can you connect her to Moscow? (p. 114)
- ✕ Who, if anyone, helped her?
- ✕ Do you think others around her were infected? If so, estimate how many. (See p. 253 to help you with the estimate)



**CCSS SPOTLIGHT:**

**English Language Arts  
Applicable Standards**

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy RL 11.12.1  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy RL 11.12.2  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy RL 11.12.3

**INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE  
AND IDEAS**  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy RH 11.12.9

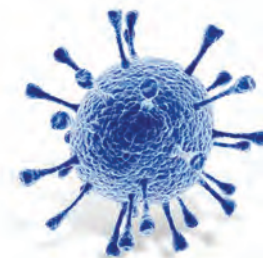
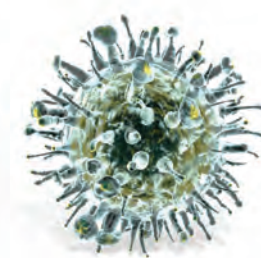
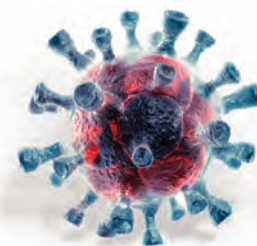
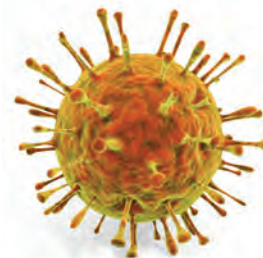
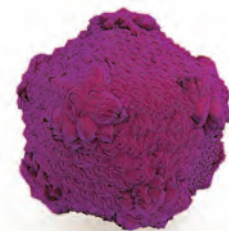
**TEXT TYPE AND PURPOSES**  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy W 11.12.2

**RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT  
KNOWLEDGE**  
**CCSS ELA** – Literacy W 11.12.7-11.12.9

**SPEAKING & LISTENING /  
COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION**  
**CCSS ELA:** Literacy 11.12.1

“You’re healthy enough  
to get on an airplane,  
and then you’re  
**dead**  
a day later.”

STATION ELEVEN, JEEVAN TO LAURA



### SOCIAL IMPACT: PANDEMICS



Choose one or several key pandemics: bubonic plague, the Influenza Pandemic of 1918, tuberculosis, small pox, measles, malaria, yellow fever, ebola, etc. Study the actual disease and its pandemic effect on society.

One approach would be to divide the class into groups and have students work together to research and present different pandemics. Or, students could also thoroughly study one pandemic (i.e. bubonic plague or the Influenza Pandemic of 1918). Divide the pandemic into different categories and have students focus on different topics (i.e. symptoms, contagion, population loss, economic effect, etc.) Within this context, students will learn about viral and bacterial infections, and how they are spread and contained. They will also learn about the society at the time of the disease and how its response contributed to or altered the course of the pandemic. The following questions could serve as a guide, or students could complete their own KWL and use those to guide their research as well.

#### QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH:

1. What is a pandemic? How is a pandemic different from an epidemic?
2. What are the symptoms of the disease? Most notably, how did/does it spread? (See p. 235 in *Station Eleven* for symptoms of the Georgia Flu)
3. What circumstances existed (or still exist) for the spread of the disease?  
  
*Note: If the students study the Influenza Pandemic of 1918, discuss how the travel—trains in particular—contributed to the spread of the flu. How would the outbreak been affected by air travel? In other words, what if traveling by planes was as popular then as it is now?*
4. How many people lost their lives?  
*Note: Compare this with the population affected in Station Eleven. (99% p. 253)*
5. What was the effect on society?
6. How was the disease ultimately contained?
7. Is the disease around today?
8. What is a vaccine? How does it work?



**SOCIAL IMPACT: QUARANTINES**

The idea of quarantine first developed during the Bubonic Plague. What exactly is a quarantine? Has Michigan ever used quarantine? Is this idea rational? Does the power to quarantine belong to the state or federal government, or both? Why is this important?



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

See [ncsl.org](http://ncsl.org) (national conference of state legislatures) and [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) for 42 U.S.C Sec. 264 (Regulations to control communicable diseases).

**ETHICAL DILEMMA: STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON SECTION 7 – THE TERMINAL**

Review Chapters 42-44. Pay particular attention to the final plane to land, an Air Gradia jet.

- ✕ What happens to it?
- ✕ What about the people onboard?
- ✕ How did those sitting in the terminal respond?

Of that decision, Clark recalls that

**“There were things he [Clark] trained himself not to think about.** Everyone he'd ever known outside the airport, for instance. And here at the airport, Air Gradia 452, silent in the distance near the perimeter fence, by unspoken agreement never discussed. Clark tried not to look at it and sometimes almost managed to convince himself that it was empty, like all of the other planes out there. Don't think of that unspeakable decision, to keep the jet sealed rather than expose a packed airport to a fatal contagion. Don't think about what enforcing that decision may have required. Don't think about those last few hours on board.” (pp. 249-250)

- ✕ Do what the people at the airport did not: discuss this decision.
- ✕ Did the people in the airport do the right thing?
- ✕ Was their decision ethical or unethical?
- ✕ What would you have done?
- ✕ Would your decision be impacted if the person you love most was on that plane?
- ✕ Is this a case where perhaps survival was sufficient?
- ✕ Contrast this response with their reaction to crime committed in their midst – see p. 252, and indeed, even the rest of the “new society.” (ferals, looting, etc.)

**SOCIAL IMPACT: VACCINES**

Vaccines have been around since the late 1700s when Edward Jenner developed the first vaccine against small pox. The measles vaccine was developed in the 1960s, and in 2000, the United States declared measles eliminated. However, the disease resurfaced in 2014-2015 at Disneyland. How did this happen? Are the vaccines effective? Investigate.

**ETHICAL DILEMMA: PHYSICIANS DEBATE TREATING UNVACCINATED KIDS.**

Read the full story here:

<http://www.healthline.com/health-news/physicians-debate-treating-unvaccinated-kids-020515#1>

As the current measles outbreak continues to spread, doctors must choose whether to continue treating unvaccinated children. What do you think?

**STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON IMMUNITY**

Someone (Ben) was likely immune to the Georgia Flu. (See p. 192) Explain how this could be true.

**CCSS SPOTLIGHT:**

English Language Arts  
Applicable Standards

**INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS**

CCSS ELA – Literacy 11.12.3

**SPEAKING & LISTENING / COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION**

CCSS ELA: Literacy 11.12.1

**SOCIAL IMPACT: PEOPLE IN THE NEWS**

**What do Kaci Hickox, Nina Pham, and Rick Sacra have in common?**

Divide the class into pairs/groups and have them find out about Kaci Hickox, Nina Pham, and Rick Sacra.

- ✕ Who is this person?
- ✕ What happened?
- ✕ Why did he or she make the news?
- ✕ Was the outcome just? Why or why not?
- ✕ What effect did his or her circumstances have on society?



**EQ4**

Is it important to remember the past? Should we continue to study it? Why or why not?

**STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT REMEMBERING THE PAST**

**“Why not create an oral history of this time we live in, and an oral history of the collapse?”**

**(Francois Diallo p. 108)**



- ✕ What do the settlements of New Petoskey (Chapters 16, 18, 21, 31, 35, and 37) and Severn City have in common?
- ✕ Why do Francois (Diallo) and Clark believe in the importance of remembering the past?
- ✕ What time period interests each?
- ✕ What impact does the product (i.e. newspaper and museum) have on society?
- ✕ Chapter 44 ends with a hope of Clark's: “He hoped for more newspapers in the years that followed, but none came.” What do you think happened to them?

**SOCIAL IMPACT: HISTORY DEBATE**

**Teachers and students are faced with increasing curriculum demands on their time, particularly with current focus on achieving high results on state standardized tests. Should we as a nation, and Michigan as a state, continue to keep history in the curriculum?**

- ✕ What are the current social studies requirements to graduate?
- ✕ Should these be altered in any way? Why or why not?
- ✕ This debate exists in *Station Eleven*. (See Chapter 46) What should they do?





# EQ5



A new reality of life after civilization is violence. Is it ever ethical to take a life?

## STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON THE ETHICS OF SURVIVAL

In a segment of the interview between Francois and Kirsten,

**Francois asks, “When you think about how the world’s changed in your lifetime, what do you think about?”**

**Kirsten: “I think of killing. Her gaze was steady.” (Chapter 50)**

- ✕ Kirsten has killed twice, and before the novel ends, will kill again.
- ✕ How does this affect her? (See p. 300)
- ✕ Why is August unique in this aspect? (Chapter 50)
- ✕ Yet, when the time comes, August does not hesitate to act. This behavior has become instinctual. Discuss.

- ✕ If there is someone who takes advantage of the age of lawlessness, it is the Prophet. How did the Prophet rise to power? Should he have been stopped earlier? Do you think his dad could have positively influenced him if he had taken the time?

### ETHICAL DILEMMA: STATION ELEVEN CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT: FRANK & JEEVAN

Most of the issues here likely involved the question of self-defense. However, there is another death in the novel that bears discussing. Review Chapters 32 and 36. Discuss Frank’s decision and Jeevan’s response.

### HUMANITIES FOCUS: ETHICS

Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, is a branch of the humanities that provides a systematic viewpoint for defending, discussing, and dealing with what is morally right or wrong. The concept of ethics dates back to the dawn of civilization and the introduction of moral codes into societies. Ethics provides the means to analyze the ideals of good and evil in our own world as well as the fictional world of *Station Eleven*.

### CCSS SPOTLIGHT:

English Language Arts  
Applicable Standards

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS  
CCSS ELA – Literacy 11.12.3

### CCSS SPOTLIGHT:

English Language Arts  
Applicable Standards

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE  
CCSS ELA – Literacy RH 11.12.5

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS  
CCSS ELA – Literacy RH 11.12.9

TEXT TYPE AND PURPOSES  
CCSS ELA – Literacy W 11.12.1  
CCSS ELA – Literacy W 11.12.2

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE  
CCSS ELA – Literacy W 11.12.7-11.12.9

SPEAKING & LISTENING / COMPREHENSION & COLLABORATION  
CCSS ELA: Literacy 11.12.1

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS  
CCSS ELA – Literacy 11.12.4



# EQ6

A quick Google search will reveal that *Station Eleven* has won multiple awards and set the literary community abuzz. However, part of the buzz comes not from the novel itself but how the novel should be categorized.

## STATION ELEVEN SPOTLIGHT ON GENRE STUDY

Valid arguments exist for each of the following categories:

literary fiction  
**GENRE**  
romance  
SCIENCE FICTION  
**POST**  
apocalyptic fiction

Break the students into groups and have them study the above genres of literature and present key characteristics and samples of each. After each of the groups has presented, the students could write a position paper on which category best fits *Station Eleven*.

A starting point for discussion can be found with the dilemma presented by *The Washington Post*:

[www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/style-blog/wp/2014/10/15/sorry-emily-st-john-mandel-resistance-is-futile/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/style-blog/wp/2014/10/15/sorry-emily-st-john-mandel-resistance-is-futile/)

as well as this article from *The New Yorker*:

[www.newyorker.com/books/joshua-rothman/better-way-think-genre-debate](http://www.newyorker.com/books/joshua-rothman/better-way-think-genre-debate)

**“I was surprised to discover that if you write literary fiction that’s set partly in the future, you’re apparently a**

**sci-fi**

**writer.”**

EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL,  
FROM *THE WASHINGTON POST*





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