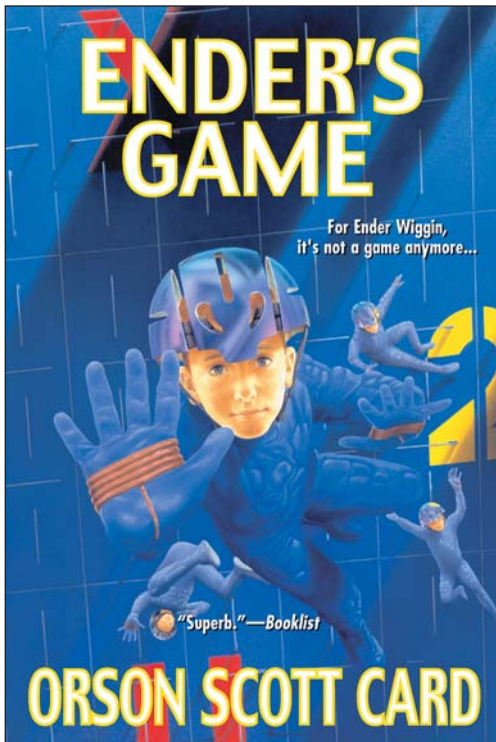




## Orson Scott Card

### Ender's Game



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Henderson, Henderson Photography, Inc.



**Orson Scott Card** is the author of the international bestsellers *Shadow Puppets*, *Shadow of the Hegemon*, and *Ender's Shadow*, and of the beloved classic of science fiction, *Ender's Game*. He lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.

#### ABOUT ENDER'S GAME

Faced with the ever-looming threat of a third alien attack, world government personnel are in constant search of potentially great military leaders, monitoring the young for key signs of strategic genius. Six-year-old Andrew “Ender” Wiggin is identified as one such optimal child. So Ender, the rarely permitted third offspring of two former dissidents, and the brother of gentle, gifted Valentine and smart but sadistic Peter, is taken from his family and home and shuttled through space to Battle School. There he lives a peculiar life, emotionally isolated from his peers, his every action and decision carefully monitored from afar by military teachers and strategists.

Ender excels at Battle School. He devises unique new fighting techniques, earns the respect (and sometimes dislike) of his classmates, and soars through levels of command faster than any other student. Meanwhile, on Earth, Ender's bright but very different siblings also rise above their childhood stations by logging onto the “nets” under pseudonyms “Demosthenes” and “Locke” for ferocious debates about modes of government. Thus the three Wiggin children, all powerful in different ways and all unhappy in different ways, struggle to grow up. And as the novel builds to its stunning, surprising climax, the consequences of wielding such power without being allowed to control it, change Ender's life and the universe forever.

To read Orson Scott Card's Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novel, *Ender's Game*, is to experience a truly great work of science fiction—the kind of tale that lingers in the mind, making one wonder about the meanings of ideas that previously seemed clear and simple. As it

“Intense is the word for *Ender's Game*.... An affecting novel full of surprises that seem inevitable once they are explained.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

posits a world where a young boy can be tricked and manipulated into becoming, perhaps, the exact type of person he despises and fears, *Ender's Game* takes a deep and critical look at what it means to be a child, a leader, and a member of the human race.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The information, activities and discussion questions which follow are intended to enhance your reading of *Ender's Game*. Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your needs and interests.

## WRITING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

### I. OMNISCIENCE

- A.** Go to the library or online to learn more about the word “omniscience.” What is an omniscient point of view in literature? Divide a sheet of paper into two columns with the headings “Omniscient Point of View” and “Individual Point of View.” In each column place at least four quotations from *Ender's Game* which represent characters speaking from each of these points of view.
- B.** With classmates or friends, hold a discussion or brief debate as to whether Commander Graf and his military colleagues are omniscient characters in the story. Write a short report outlining the results of your discussion or debate.
- C.** Wearing a monitor enabled Ender's every action and feeling to be observed by others. How did Ender feel about this? In the character of Ender, write a paragraph exploring your thoughts about wearing a monitor and/or about having your monitor removed.
- D.** How would you feel if someone were observing you all the time? Partner with a classmate or friend and choose roles of “monitor” and “monitored.” Spend a class period, an hour, or longer during which the monitor follows and observes the actions of the monitored person. Each participant should keep a written record of his or her observations, actions, and feelings about the experience. If desired, switch roles and repeat the exercise. Afterward discuss your experience.
- E.** Write a short story, poem, one-act play, or lyrics for a song entitled “The Monitor.”

### II. THIRD

- A.** To be a third child in Ender's society is a cause for shame. Explore the notion of “three” or “third” in your world by creating a collage of words and images of three. Use written text, clippings from magazine or newspapers, photographs, drawings, or other materials in your collage. Consider including story, song, and film titles incorporating the word “three”; Earth as the third planet from the sun; expressions and slogans involving threes; scientific and geometric concepts involving three states or angles; and words beginning with “tri.”
- B.** Write the script for a short scene in which government leaders debate giving the Wiggin family permission to have a third child. Perform the scene for classmates or friends.
- C.** Go to the library or online to learn more about the role of birth order in child development. Prepare a short report on your findings. Present your report as the opening for a group discussion as to whether Ender fits the profile of a typical third child.
- D.** Peter denigrates Ender by calling him “Third.” How does Ender react to these taunts? How do you feel when a sibling or friend teases you about something you cannot change? How do you react? Write a short essay describing your feelings and reactions.

### III. BATTLE SCHOOL

- A.** Imagine it is the day Ender is taken to Battle School. In the character of Ender's father, mother, sister, or brother, write a journal entry describing your feelings or write a letter to Ender that you imagine he will read on his journey.
- B.** Using drawing materials or a computer graphics program, create two or three illustrations of Ender's Battle School. You may choose to illustrate the shuttle, a dormitory room, the Battle Room, the hallways, or other Battle School settings described in the novel.
- C.** Create a graph comparing and contrasting Ender's various commanders and teachers, including Bonzo, Rose the Nose, and Petra. Consider their leadership style, battle strategies, attitudes toward Ender, and feelings about Battle School.
- D.** Make a list of Battle School children who are friendly with Ender. Imagine a military leader is interviewing these children about their relationships with Ender. With a group of classmates or friends, decide who will portray the military leader and who will portray each friend. As a team, prepare a list of questions for the leader to ask. Then role-play the interviews for the group. What does this exercise teach you about Ender?

**E.** On page 96, Colonel Graff comments that “Fairness is a wonderful attribute...It has nothing to do with war.” Find other quotations in the book that Graff and his colleagues use to support their treatment of Ender. Do you agree that their treatment of young Ender is justifiable and/or necessary? Use your quotations as the basis for a classroom discussion or debate about the government’s “education” of Ender Wiggin.

**F.** What does it mean to be a student, to go to school, to be in the process of learning and preparing for adulthood? Write a short personal essay describing how reading *Ender’s Game* has (or has not) influenced your response to these questions.

#### **IV. LEADERSHIP**

**A.** As Ender assumes a leadership role at Battle School, Valentine and Peter find their own kind of power on the nets in the characters of Demosthenes and Locke. Go to the library or online to research one of these real historical figures, Demosthenes or Locke. Prepare an informative poster about your chosen historical figure. Present your poster to classmates or friends, then explain how your research helps you understand why Valentine and Peter chose this name for one of their net identities.

**B.** On page 87, Ender makes an observation about anger: “Hot anger was bad. Ender’s anger was cold, and he could use it. Bonzo’s anger was hot, and so it used him.” Make a list of characters who you consider leaders in *Ender’s Game*. Beside each character name, note whether their anger runs “hot” or “cold.” Then write a brief description of each character’s leadership style. Does the nature of each character’s anger relate to his or her quality of leadership? Can you apply these observations to leaders in your own community or in the world? Use your reflections as the basis for a short essay on “Anger and Leadership.”

**C.** On page 141, Ender realizes that he cannot have friendships like the other Battle School students because, “Now he was the master soldier and he was completely, utterly alone.” Use this quotation as the starting point for a short story or essay on why it is lonely to be a leader. Conclude with a discussion of your own experiences taking on leadership roles and/or your thoughts about the possibility of becoming a leader in the future. Do you think you would feel like Ender? Why or why not?

**D.** Imagine you are a student of military history in the decade following Ender’s great victory. You have been assigned to make the definitive booklet about Ender Wiggin’s battle strategies. Include things Ender might teach future commanders about leadership, strategy, and anything else you choose. Illustrate the booklet, create a title and cover page, and share the finished product with friends or classmates.

#### **V. AFTERMATH**

**A.** Create a set of cartoon-style frames depicting the battle that is Ender’s “final exam.” Caption each frame with quotes excerpted from the novel.

**B.** Design a poster depicting Ender as a hero after the defeat of the buggers. Then write a short newspaper article describing Graff’s trial in which you characterize Ender as a villain.

**C.** Were the buggers a true enemy of Earth? Divide your classmates or friends into two groups (“yes” and “no”) to debate this question. If possible, cite real historical examples to support your positions. After the debate, take a vote as to whether most people think the government was correct or incorrect in their decision to destroy the buggers.

**D.** Use colored pencils, inks, or pastels to draw a picture of the place Ender discovers on the distant, new colony he helps to found. Or use paper, dried grasses, fabric scraps, or other craft materials to create your version of the hive queen’s cocoon.

**E.** In a short essay, compare and contrast the act of having a speaker for the dead, with funeral rituals of other religions. Go to the library or online to learn more about funeral rites in different cultures. Use this research to enhance your essay.

**F.** Write the script for a movie scene in which Ender and Valentine discuss the possibility of his return to Earth and their thoughts about their planet’s future. Include other characters, such as Bean, Petra, or Peter, if desired. Perform your scene for friends or classmates.

**G.** Imagine you have been chosen as Ender’s “speaker for the dead.” Write a speech in which you discuss the good and bad elements of Ender’s life. Present your speech for friends or classmates.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In the opening pages of *Ender's Game*, Ender observes that "Sometimes lies were more dependable than the truth." What does he mean by this? Do you think his observation is correct or incorrect? What does this observation reveal about Ender?
2. What is a "third"? Why were Ender's parents permitted to have a third? Describe Ender's relationships with Valentine and with Peter.
3. Are Ender's relationships with others different because he is a third? In what ways are his relationships with his siblings similar to, or different from, your relationships with brothers, sisters, or close relatives?
4. How does Graff persuade Ender to go to Battle School? How does Ender set himself apart from the other boys before he even reaches Battle School?
5. In the schoolyard, in the shuttle, and later at Battle School, Ender kills in self-defense. Later in the story, a colonel comments that "Ender isn't a killer. He just wins—thoroughly." Is this a sufficient explanation for why Ender hurts people? Why doesn't Ender turn to others for help? Do you think Ender is a killer? Why or why not?
6. What is the Giant's Drink? What does Ender conclude from this mind game? What does his play teach those who observe him about Ender? Who do you think is manipulating this game?
7. In chapter 7, Petra tells Ender, "They never tell you any more truth than they have to." Who are "they"? Who does Ender perceive as his enemy at this point in the story?
8. Dink Meeker discusses childhood with Ender, commenting, "We're not children. Children can lose sometimes, and nobody cares." Is Dink correct? Does Dink feel sorry about his observation? What are the goals of the "children" at Battle School? How are their goals similar to, or different from, the goals of children you know?
9. What techniques does Ender use to train his Dragon Army? What strategies does he take from his old commanders? What mistakes does he see himself making? What does he do about his errors?
10. Does Ender enjoy the Battle Room? Explain your answer.
11. How do the other boys treat Ender as his Dragon Army rises to the top of the rankings? Where does Ender go to learn more after it becomes clear he cannot be defeated by his classmates?
12. In chapter 11, Ender tells Graff and Anderson that he no longer plays the fantasy computer game because he won it. Is this true?
13. On page 128, Valentine notes that: "There was more Peter in her than she could bear to admit, though sometimes she dared to think about it anyway." What is the "Peter" in Valentine? Does this same "Peter" exist in Ender? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
14. What is the special relationship between Ender and Bean? What innovations does Bean contribute to Dragon Army?
15. What does Bonzo Madrid plan to do to Ender? Why doesn't the Battle School staff foil Bonzo's plot? Why does Bonzo feel such hatred toward Ender? How does Ender feel about the attack? What does Ender do to Bonzo?
16. As Peter and Valentine achieve greater success in their secret roles, Valentine wonders if, "Perhaps it's impossible to wear an identity without becoming what you pretend to be." Is this musing correct? Does it ever apply to your own life? Have Valentine and Peter, in their drive to succeed as Demosthenes and Locke, created their own ideological "Battle School"?
17. When they meet at the lake, what does Ender explain to Valentine about loving his enemy? What conundrum does this create for Ender? Why does Ender decide to go back to his life of battle training? Where does Graff take him when they leave Earth?
18. Describe Ender's life on Eros. Who replaces Graff as Ender's teacher? What does Ender's new teacher tell him about Eros that seems to explain his discomfort?
19. With the help of his fighters, former classmates from Battle School, what does Ender decide to do in his "final exam" game? What is different about this game? What is really happening?
20. How does Ender react when he learns the truth about his battle simulations? Does Mazer Rackham's explanation that Ender was a "weapon" aimed by the responsible adult government officials offer the boy any comfort?
21. What happens on Earth after the defeat of the buggers? Were Peter's predictions correct? Does Demosthenes's position win the day on Earth, or does Locke's?
22. Where do Ender and Valentine go after the war is over? What does Ender find on the new colony?
23. What are the books that Ender writes? Why is it important that there are two stories? Are Ender's books, in a way, the foundation for a new religion? Why or why not?

**24.** Although he will always carry the weight of his crimes with him, has Ender, as a speaker for the dead, finally achieved some autonomy over his own life? What is his mission now?

**25.** Early in the story, Graff tells Ender that “Human beings are free except when humanity needs them.” What does Graff mean? Do you think this is a true philosophy? Does Graff’s statement apply to human beings in our world today? Explain your answer.

**26.** In his introduction, Orson Scott Card states that “*Ender’s Game* is a story about gifted children. It is also a story about soldiers...The story is one that you and I will construct together in your memory...” In what way do you most relate to the novel? What character or perspective is most relevant to your own life? How does Card’s statement help readers understand the actions of character in Ender’s fictional universe?