

The Mystery at Black Rock Beach:
Comprehension Questions for Chapters 5-8

ANSWER KEY

1. Describe Franny's personality.

Franny is sassy yet sweet and loyal to her family. She is a dramatic house fly who doesn't take life too seriously yet at the same time, she is considered wise beyond her age. She attributes her wise attitude to her fascination with older musicians who are rather edgy and rebellious. She wants to be a famous musician when she grows up. She plays the guitar and sings.

2. In chapter 5, explain what is meant by, "For a second, Franny wished she hadn't asked such a question.")

Her father's answer to her question is so in-depth, that it gives her too much 'food for thought.' She has a curiosity about life but often, prefers to *stay* curious without having all the answers.

3. Based on information provided in chapter 6, what do you know about the Feldman Family?

The Feldman family is non-judgmental and accepting of all types of flies — house flies, fruit flies, blow flies, crane flies, and horse flies. A parallel can be drawn to real life and the importance of being non-judgmental and accepting of all genders, ages, races, religions, and ethnicities.

4. In chapter 6, why doesn't Finny Feldman recognize the flies when he first runs into them, asking if they have seen his dog Frances?

Finny is grief-stricken. His own sadness for the loss of his dog prevents him from thinking clearly and acknowledging the two faces that he is staring at.

5. In chapter 6, when the twins first discover that Frances is missing, it seems as though they are more surprised to see Finny Feldman. Do you agree? Why or why not?

One possible answer is that yes, I do agree. Finny Feldman lives in Palm Springs and the flies find it rather odd that their next-door neighbor would be on vacation the same week as them, on the same tropical island.

6. In chapter 7, what is Franny's initial reaction to her brothers telling her that Frances is missing?

Franny is preoccupied with reading her music magazine and listening to music with her headphones so at first, she isn't concerned. It is almost as if her brothers interrupted an article she was reading or a song she was listening to and she is feeling frustrated.

7. In chapter 7, why are the twins' descriptions of the two men they saw in the alley easily misunderstood by Franny?

One possible answer is that often when something disturbing or concerning is seen, the mind has trouble recalling the events in a clear and logical manner.

8. In chapter 7, what is it about the Counting Flies song lyric that makes Franny worry about Frances?

Franny experiences the world through her love of rock music. She makes sense of what is happening around her by drawing parallels to song lyrics. She worries about Frances after hearing the twins' recollection of two men about to hit a dog. The song lyric references some type of abuse. Singing the lyrics aloud in her head, makes her question if the two men her brothers saw in the alley on their way home, have *more* than one dog in their possession.

9. In chapter 8, how do Frederick and Fiona's reactions to Franny's handwritten note *shift* from a more light-hearted tone to serious and concerned?

Frederick and Fiona's initial reaction upon reading the note is to be pleased that their children are having fun on vacation and off on a little adventure.

However, reality quickly sets in when Frederick begins to recall a childhood memory and discovers that the note is actually a serious account of his children having gone to find and possibly rescue a missing dog.

10. In what ways are Frederick and Fiona alike? In what ways are they different?

Frederick and Fiona are both optimistic, positive parents. They look on the bright side and see the glass as half-full. Fiona is often guilty of being too optimistic, to the point of not seeing the reality of a situation. Frederick on the other hand, is grounded and able to see the reality of a situation even when it means acknowledging that something is not right.