

***The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch* by Joseph Delaney Teacher Guide**

Grades 9-12 Book 2: September 24th – October 7th

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Apprenticeship: a system of learning the skills of a craft or trade from experts in the field by working with them for a set period of time. The apprenticeship system was used extensively by the craft guilds in the Middle Ages. It continued to be important in learning a trade until the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, after which it was largely replaced by the factory system. Revived in the 20th century, it is used in the United States by industries that require highly skilled workers. The terms of modern apprenticeships are specified in a contract and are regulated by trade unions and laws. The National Apprenticeship Act passed in 1937 led to the establishment of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training in the U.S. Department of Labor, which works with employers, labor groups, and schools to promote apprenticeship programs.

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In Joseph Delaney's story, the main character Thomas Ward is apprenticed at the tender age of twelve. The St. Petersburg Times has both a classified section for job listings and also many feature stories that discuss people's careers. Looking at news articles that deal with careers, what jobs do you feel would benefit from apprenticeship instead of formal training like college? Select an apprenticeship-style job and a job that requires a college education. Write a short essay that compares and contrasts these two jobs and training paths. Be sure to tell us which path you would choose and why. Send your essay to jillwilson@sptimes.com and you might see it featured in the future on our Times NIE Web site.

Discussion Questions

1. Pros/Cons: What do you think would be the positive points of learning a trade at a young age? What would an early apprenticeship be a bad idea? Use example of careers and jobs you read about in the St Petersburg Times to illustrate your answers.
2. In the Last Apprentice, Thomas trusts the young girl Alice even though he's been warned to stay away from "girls with pointy shoes". Why do you think Thomas continues to stay loyal to Alice despite the many strikes against her? Look through the St. Petersburg Times for an article where a wrong assumption about someone has led to problems. Write a paragraph or two describing the situation and how a different outcome could have been reached.