



Pushing the Limits of Knowledge Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

This theme explores the concept of knowledge, and how it overlaps and diverges with information and learning. In your discussions consider what makes different types of knowledge important over time.

Cat's Cradle

Kurt Vonnegut, Fiction. *Cat's Cradle* is Kurt Vonnegut's satirical commentary on modern man and his madness. An apocalyptic tale of this planet's ultimate fate, it features a vision of the future that is at once blackly fatalistic and hilariously funny. A book that left an indelible mark on an entire generation of readers, *Cat's Cradle* is one of the twentieth century's most important works—and Vonnegut at his very best. - *amazon.com*

- How did *Cat's Cradle* make you think about social progress and the idea of knowledge through science?
- What purpose do you think the history of San Lorenzo Island serves in the novel? Does it help explain the motivations of certain characters? Does it progress the plot in any meaningful way? Does it enhance a certain theme?
- Is humanity inevitably doomed, according to the novel? Why or why not? What are the biggest problems facing humankind? How might we use science, technologies, or engineering to address them?
- What are some of the ways that Vonnegut skewers religion, greed, businessmen, the military and Americans in general?

