

## Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Additional Reading Guide Questions

Before you begin reading, think what you already know about museums and about wonderment. What are the sources of what you know?

As you read, note the persons, places and books named. Of all those noted, who is one person you would be intrigued to talk to in person (if they were alive), a place you would like to visit, and a book you would like to read. Why would those be your choices?

### Book Cover, Author Biography, Epigraph, Frontispiece, and Endpaper

1. Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder is "the latest installment in Weschler's ongoing Passions and Wonders series." If you were to suggest the next topic in the series, what passion or wonder would it be, and why?
2. Before reading the book, look at the double-page drawings (pp. iv-v and 171-172). What do these illustrations make you expect of this book?

### Part I Inhaling the Spore

1. What seems to be the spore that Weschler metaphorically refers to in the title of Part I?
2. To what extent does the book itself seem like a cabinet of wonder or a museum collection?
3. "'What kind of thing is this Museum of Jurassic Technology?' ... 'What kind of thing does it seem like to you?'" (p. 40).
4. What do you anticipate of this book, as you read the epigraph quoted from Michael Faraday, "Nothing is too wonderful to be true"?
5. What impact does it have on you as a reader that Weschler began and ended Part I with an illustration of a pronged ant?

### Part II Cerebral Growth

1. When the future looks back on Sim City, World of Warcraft and Second Life, why might or might not these be catalogued along with the entirely imaginary worlds of William Willers, Donald Evans, Norman Daly, or Everett Ormsby Hokes?
2. What do you think is Weschler's purpose for including the lists of wonders on pages 76-77, 96, and 118-119? What makes these lists intriguing? What categories of things don't you find in the lists of wonders? Why might they not have been recorded in the lists?
3. "...Feynman jotted on a piece of notepaper one day, 'teach how doubt is not to be feared but welcomed.'" What doubts may you have about what it will be like to be a UM student, and what are some of the reasons that you welcome such doubt?

4. Weschler described the bounty in an Indian market as a list, akin to the list of collections of wonder. What is the list of items in a place that you have found to have “wild, wonderful stuff?” (p. 98)
5. To find out more about the items in Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder, what topics or fields might you study at UM?

### **Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder overview**

1. What has been the greatest marvel that you have read about in Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder?
2. Now that you’ve read Weschler’s entire book, to what extent do you believe that you have “inhaled the spore” about which he writes? How might ‘inhaling the spore’ influence how you approach your experience at UM?
3. How accurate do you find the acclaim inside the front cover to be? Write your own acclaim (or disclaimer) for Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder.