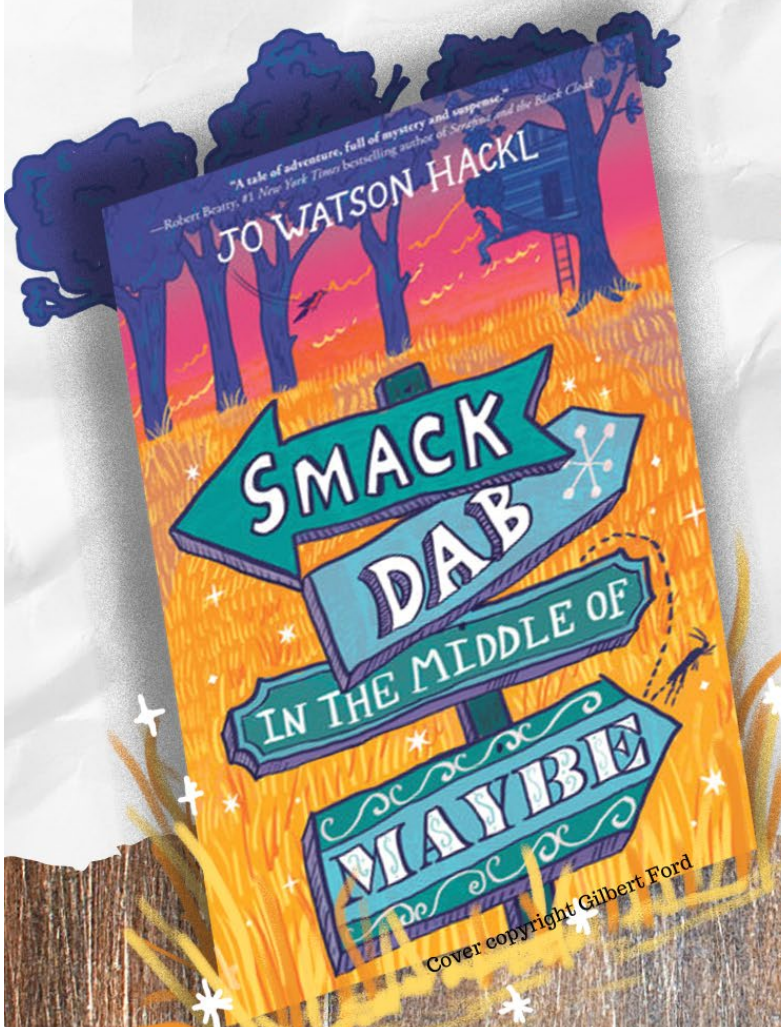


SMACK DAB
in the middle of a
SUMMER
ADVENTURE



Based upon Smack
Dab in the Middle
of Maybe
By Jo Watson Hackl



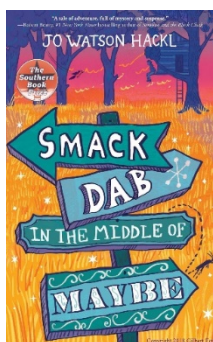
Summer Adventure Checklist

You can use the list below to check off the summer adventure activities that you have completed! This kit uses *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* as its springboard, but you can do most of the activities below whether or not you've read the book.

- Write an acrostic poem with the letters of your name and your best friend's name about the nature adventures you'd both like to have this summer
- Create your own clue trail
- Go on a hike, spot one plant or animal from the book, *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*, and draw it in the style of Bob the artist from *Smack Dab*
- Go on a nature walk and take photos of interesting plants and animals that you would like to research later
- Go on a nature scavenger hunt! Find a plant or animal that begins with each letter of the alphabet
- Check out a book on birds in your local area, identify the birds you see around you each day, and research facts about them
- Visit an art museum and pick your favorite art piece. Make your own creation inspired by that piece. You can use similar styles, colors, mediums, subject matter and other elements
- Pick 10 words from any page of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* and create a poem with it
- Go on a nature expedition, tune into your senses, and write a poem or paragraph about it. Write about the different plants and animals you saw
- Press flowers or leaves to make a bookmark or card
- Visit a park and enjoy a picnic lunch with at least one item from the *Smack Dab* book club menu (<https://johackl.com/activities/bookclubs/book-club-menu/>)
- Create your own playlist of local bands and artists
- Build your own discovery center! Include one rock, one leaf, one flower, one seed or nut, and a photo of animal tracks

About *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*

“Eleven days, thirteen clues and one kid who won’t give up”



Smack Dab takes readers on an adventure with 12-year-old Cricket and her companion, a field cricket named Charlene, through an overgrown ghost town in Electric City, Mississippi, to solve a thirty-year-old clue trail in search of a secret room that may or may not exist, all to try to win back Cricket’s run-away mother. Cricket must use her wits and just a smidgen of luck to live off the land during a Mississippi winter, survive sleet storm and snake-bite, and work to solve an increasingly baffling clue trail left by an eccentric artist with a logic all his own. Along the way, Cricket meets the reclusive last resident of the ghost town, enlists the help of a poetry-loving dog, and takes up a touch of grave-robbing. These experiences awaken Cricket to the possibility of finding strength in the most unlikely of places—within herself.

Praise for *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*

Winner of the Southern Book Prize, an Amazon Teacher’s Pick, winner of the Mississippi Library Association’s Children’s Literature Author Award, a Publisher’s Weekly National Bestseller, an Indie Next pick and an Okra pick

- “Told in the easy, laconic tone of good, Southern storytelling, Hackl’s debut rolls off the tongue and into the heart easy as warm butter on a biscuit. Lyrical and endearing, this debut is a genuine adventure tale, poignant and as fresh as a spring garden.”—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- “Cricket is an intriguing and complex protagonist, and the plot, full of adventure, treasure hunts, and mystery, will keep young readers hooked.”
—*School Library Journal*
- “A masterful debut. Cricket is my new hero, brave and funny and full of heart. Jo Watson Hackl’s new middle- grade novel has art, poetry, and adventure—and I couldn’t put it down.”—Augusta Scattergood, award-winning author of *Glory Be*
- “*Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* is part treasure hunt, part wilderness adventure, and all heart.” —Alan Gatz, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Refugee*



Acrostic Poem

Write a poem about the nature adventures that you and your best friend would like to have this summer. To make an acrostic poem, write the first name of each of you and your best friend in a column below and begin each line of your poem with one of the letters. For example, Cricket would write a line beginning with C, then R, then I, and so on.



Create Your Own Clue Trail!

Cricket had to follow an elaborate clue trail to find the bird room and a mysterious treasure that was left behind by the creator of the bird room. Can you hide your own treasure, and create a clue trail for others to solve to find it?

Answer the questions below to begin your clue trail:

What is your favorite animal? It can be a reptile, bird, insect, or pet: _____

What is something interesting that you learned in school? _____

What is your favorite poem? _____

What is your favorite plant? _____

Where is your favorite place? _____

What is a constellation that you like? _____

What is your favorite riddle? _____

What is your favorite scouting skill? This could be using a compass, spotting constellations, using a map, etc.) _____

Who is your favorite artist? _____

What is your favorite song or painting? _____

What is your favorite quote from the book *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*? _____

What page is that quote on? _____

What time of day is best for finding your hiding spot? _____

Use your answers from the questions above to inspire clues for your clue trail. How can you make your answers link up together to make a trail?

Write out your clues below. Make sure that each clue leads to the next one, and that the last clue leads to the hiding place of your treasure. It may help to start with the hiding place and work backwards. The chart on the next page will help.

Clue #1:

Clue #2:

Clue #3:

Clue #4:

Clue #5:

Clue #6:

Clue #7:

Clue #8:

Clue #9:

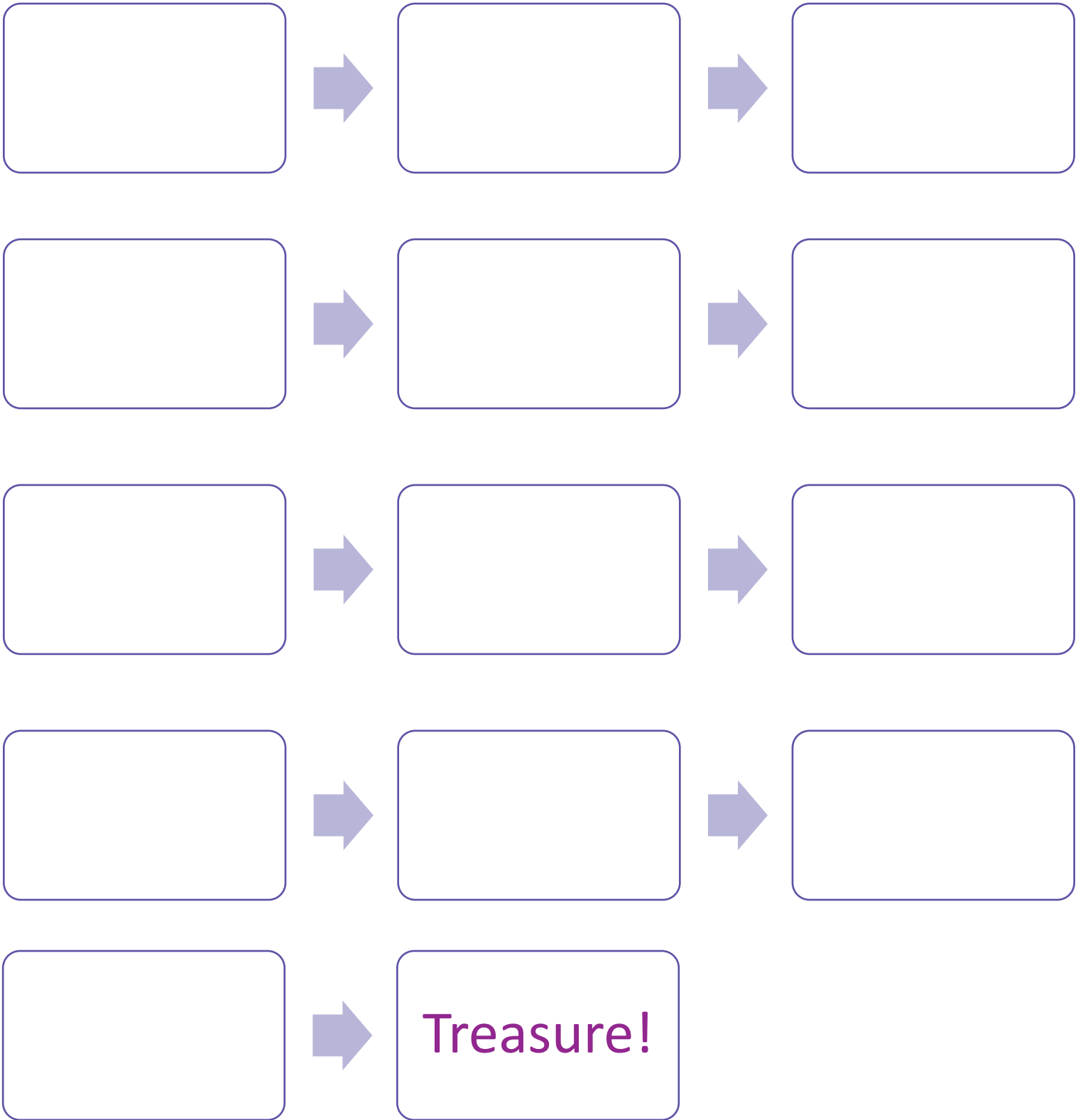
Clue #10:

Clue #11:

Clue #12:

Clue #13:

Use the clues that you wrote on the previous page, and chart them out here.





Smack Dab in the Middle of a Hike

Go on a hike and spot at least one non-poisonous plant or animal from *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*. List the plant or animal that you saw and draw a picture of it using the style of the artist “Bob” from *Smack Dab*.

The Plant or Animal: _____

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for drawing a picture of the plant or animal observed during the hike.



Nature Walk

Go on a nature walk and take photographs of interesting plants and animals you would like to research later!

Photo of an animal:

What questions do I have about this animal? _____

Information I found:

Photo of a plant:

What questions do I have about this plant? _____

Information I found:



Nature Scavenger Hunt

On a nature walk, find plants and animals that start with each letter of the alphabet! Can you find all 26?

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

X

Y

Z



Birds and Books

Cricket's mother was fascinated by the scarlet tanager, one of the birds in the secret room. What birds live in your area? Visit your local library and check out a nonfiction book about birds to find out! Read about the different types of birds in your area, and try to spot them in your backyard, at the park, and in nature. How many facts can you learn about each bird? Write them below:

The book:

Birds in my area and facts about them:

Birds I've seen and facts about them:

Birds I want to see and facts about them:



Museum Field Trip- Making Art

Visit an art museum and pick your favorite piece of art. Create your own piece of art inspired by it! You can use similar styles, colors, mediums, subject matter or other elements.

If it is a drawing, use the space below. If not, take a photograph of your art and glue it to this page.



Smack Dab in the Middle of a Poem!

Pick 10 words from any page of *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe* and create a poem with it! You can ask a parent or guardian to post your poem on social media with the hashtag **#smackdabpoetry**. The most creative and most popular poems will be awarded prizes! (void where prohibited)

Word #1:

Word #6:

Word #2:

Word #7:

Word #3:

Word #8:

Word #4:

Word #9:

Word #5:

Word #10:

Your Poem:



Flower or Leaf Pressing

Press flowers or leaves and then make something creative with it! For example, you can make a bookmark or card.

If you prefer, you can put some flowers or leaves you pressed on this page, identify them, and write any facts that you learned about them.



Smack Dab in the Middle of a Picnic

Visit a park and enjoy a picnic lunch with at least one item from the Smack Dab book club menu. Look below to see any recipes you'd like to try!

Find out how to make them at: <https://johackl.com/activities/bookclubs/book-club-menu/>

Smack Dab Punch

Pomegranate juice, lemonade, ginger ale, lemon slice, sugared violet blossoms

Aunt Belinda's Salted Pecans

Shelled pecan halves, sugar, butter

Miss V's Deviled Eggs

Hard-boiled eggs, mayonnaise, mustard, relish, chives

Thelma's Sour Cream Biscuits

Flour, sour cream, butter

Charlene's Celery with Peanut Butter

Celery, peanut butter

Mississippi Cheese Straws

Mississippi cheese, butter, flour

Shrimp and Vegetable with Comeback Sauce

Mayonnaise, garlic, ketchup, Tabasco

Jubilee Jalapeno Cheese Grits

Mississippi grits, jalapeno, cheese, butter, salt and pepper

Mama's Black-Eyed Pea Salad

Mississippi field peas, peppers, olive oil, vinegar, shallots



My Local Playlist

Did you know that there is a playlist for *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*? It includes songs from Mississippi artists, where the book takes place. You can listen to it here: <https://johackl.com/activities/playlist/> Research musicians who started in your home city or state and create your own Smack Dab playlist of local bands/artists whose songs relate to a chapter in the book. You can ask your parent or guardian to post it on social media with the hashtag **#myownsmackdabplaylist**. There are prizes for the most creative and most popular playlists (void where prohibited).

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____

Song: _____

Artist: _____



Discovery Center

Build your own discovery center! A discovery center is collection of items from nature that you would like to explore and discover more about! For more on how to create your own discovery center, watch the last video on this page:

<https://johackl.com/activities/nature/wonder-hour/>

What will you include in your discovery center? If you know each type of item you have in your discovery center, write it down below!

Rock: _____

Leaf: _____

Flower: _____

Seed/Nut: _____

Photo of Animal Tracks:

About the Author

Jo was born near Ocean Springs, Mississippi, where her favorite artist, Walter Anderson, painted a secret room. Jo later moved to the ghost town of Electric Mills, Mississippi. Anderson's secret room and the ghost town inspired Jo's novel, *Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe*. Today Jo lives in Greenville, South Carolina with her husband, children, and her dog Pupper, who just happens to closely resemble the character of Percy in the book.



Jo founded www.Outdoorosity.org as a free resource for educators and families to celebrate the treasures and curiosities of nature with stories, know-how and inspiration to get readers outside. She'd love to hear from you and about how your class, family or community group has used this Adventure Kit. You can find her at:

Facebook: @Jo Watson Hackl Author

Twitter: @JoHackl

Instagram: @JoHackl

Working with experienced educators, Jo has created a bounty of free resources for you to use with the book. They can be found at www.JoHackl.com and include:

- A "Building Grit Kit"
- An Activity Guide with activities that can be performed in classroom, home, and community settings
- An Educator's Guide and over 30 lesson plans
- A book trailer for readers and a series of "Woods Time Adventures" to encourage engagement with the natural world, available on Jo's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbAUWJcBM1dicuK82P4d0w>;
- An interactive map with a links to the real places that inspired parts of the book
- A "hidden objects" search featuring items from the clue trail in the book
- Book Club discussion questions and a Book Club menu featuring book-inspired recipes
- A series of "Cricket Challenges" for readers to extend their reading experience into the real world
- A "Writing and Revision Toolkit"
- A book-inspired playlist
- Bookmarks with fun, free things to do outdoors and ways to make reading more fun
- An interactive clue trail that readers can solve using things that they learned from the book; readers who solve the clue trail receive a printable clue solvers badge!

Jo wishes you many more fun reading and outdoor adventures!