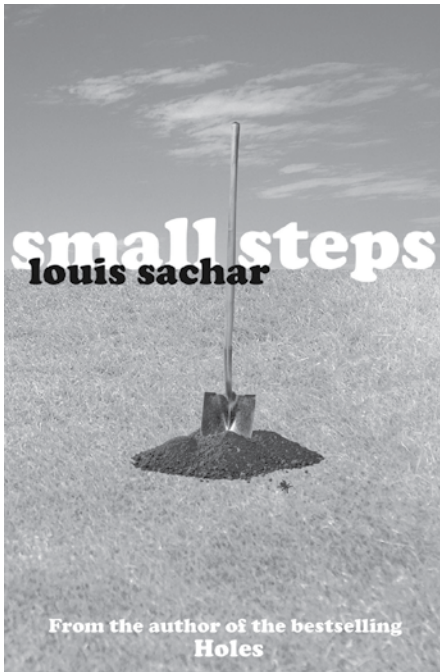


**‘Small Steps has Sachar’s familiar ease,
intelligent humour, suspense and humanity’**
Sunday Times

small steps

louis sachar

Price	£6.99 /€10.20
Case	Read On Age 8+
Author	Louis Sachar
Publisher	Bloomsbury



Using this book in your classroom

Quick summary

This fast-paced and entertaining novel follows on from *Holes*, Louis Sachar's best-selling masterpiece. It takes up the story of two minor characters from *Holes* – Armpit and X-Ray – and their attempts to start new lives after their release from the horrific juvenile detention centre, Camp Green Lake.

Everything seems to be going OK for Armpit – he's working for a landscaping firm (digging more holes) and earning reasonable money while he catches up on his education. But then X-Ray thinks up a disastrous plan for making money by touting tickets for singer Kaira DeLeon's sellout concerts – and Armpit gets sucked into it. Things start off badly and get worse, eventually involving extortion, theft and even attempted murder. But Armpit emerges as a quiet hero, learning the hard way to do the right thing and struggling by small steps to rebuild his life.

Story themes

This novel explores issues including friendship, loyalty and the importance of doing what you know is right. The hero, Armpit, is African American and offers insights into some of the disadvantages experienced by young black men.

The story session

1. Introducing the story

If you or the children have read *Holes*, start by sharing thoughts about it. (If you haven't read *Holes*, this won't affect your enjoyment of *Small Steps*.) Say: "The hero of this book is called Armpit. He and his friend X-Ray used to be in prison at a place called Camp Green Lake, but now they are trying to make new lives for themselves. Another important person in the book is a teenage singer, Kaira DeLeon, and we're going to start by hearing about Kaira."

2. Reading the story

Read pages 12-18. At page 15 you may need to explain that the story has now shifted to Armpit and X-Ray. You may also want to explain that Ponce de Leon was a 16th century Spanish explorer and the first European to set foot in Florida.

3. Follow-up

- Talk about what X-Ray and Armpit are planning to do. Can children see any problems with the scheme? What do

they think could go wrong?

- Ask: "Do you think Kaira DeLeon is enjoying being famous? What are the downsides of being famous?"
- Ask: "What do you think is going to happen next for the characters?"

Did You Know?

- Louis Sachar's novel *Holes* has won major American literary prizes including the Newbery and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature. It was also listed in the BBC's Big Read Top 100.
- He writes for two hours every morning – no longer, because after that he starts to lose concentration.

