

# Report to the Principal's Office



By

Jerry Spinelli

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Report to the Principal's Office

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**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Note to Teachers

This integrated novel study guide is designed to assist the classroom teacher in the reading of *Report to the Principal's Office*. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two to four chapters of *Report to the Principal's Office* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

### Before You Read the Chapter and Vocabulary.

The first two sections of the novel study are designed to be completed before the students read the designated chapters. This will enable students to gain some familiarity with relevant topics or themes addressed in these chapters as well as familiarizing them with potentially new words they will encounter.

### Reading Comprehension.

Once the students have read the assigned chapters (either orally in a group setting or silently), they can then be assigned some or all of the comprehension questions included for those particular chapters. A blend of factual & higher-order thinking questions are included.

### Language and Extension Activities.

A selection of activities are included:

- Vocabulary development activities (synonyms and homophones, parts of speech, anagrams, etc.)
- Creative and critical thinking activities (conducting an interview, identifying the novel's climax, describing one's personal feelings, etc.)
- In addition, the unit has a number of integrated activities (art, research skills, creative writing, etc.)

A **portfolio cover** (p.8) as well as a **Checklist** (p.7) are included so that students may track their completed work.

**Every activity need not be completed by all students.**

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include coping with change, coming of age, the importance of friendship, and making good choices.

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## Student Checklist

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. *For instance the English Language Arts Standards>> Reading Literature>> Grade 5,* makes reference to the following:

- a) Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- b) determining the meaning of words and phrases . . . including figurative language;
- c) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- d) compare and contrast two characters;
- e) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- f) drawing inferences from the text;
- g) determining a theme of a story.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locate descriptive words/phrases
2. List synonyms/homophones
3. Identify/create *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identify syllables
6. Identify *personification*
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. List compound words
9. Identify parts of speech
10. Determine alphabetical order
11. Identify root words
12. Identify/create *similes*

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Complete a Story Pyramid
5. Identify the climax of the novel

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Describe your personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Create a friendly letter

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

It's the first day of school at Plumstead Middle School, and already there's trouble. It starts with Sunny Wyler, who is determined to do whatever it will take to get herself suspended. Then there's Eddie Mott, who has a three-point plan for fitting in, but still gets beaten up on the morning bus. Salem Brownmiller is all too pleased to witness Eddie's troubles – as a future famous writer, who's drawn to drama. And on top of it all, there's Pickle Johnson, who is just . . . well . . . Pickles.

These four sixth graders have only one thing in common. They're all about to report to the principal's office. [The Publisher]

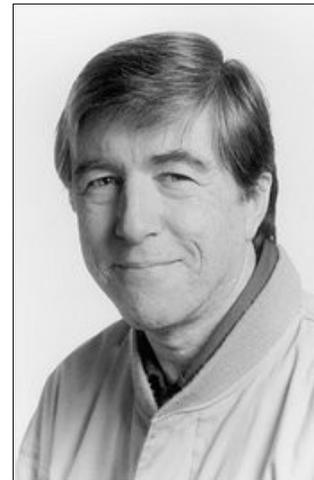
## Author Biography

*Jerry Spinelli*

Born in 1941 in Norristown, Pennsylvania, Jerry Spinelli discovered his calling in 1957 when his high school football team won a big game. The town celebrated, his fellow students raced through the streets, but Jerry sneaked back home and marked the occasion in his own way. He wrote a poem. Later the town newspaper published it. "And," he reports, "I've been a writer ever since."

Married to Eileen Spinelli, who is also a writer, Jerry was for many years an editor for the Chilton Company. Now a full-time writer, he lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

Jerry Spinelli's immensely popular books include **Space Station Seventh Grade**, **Jason and Marceline**, **Who Put That Hair in My Toothbrush?** and **Maniac Magee**, which has won more than fifteen state children's book awards in addition to the Newbery Medal. [The Publisher]





# Report To The Principal's Office



*By Jerry Spinelli*

Name:

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# Report to the Principal's Office

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## Chapters 1-3



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. *Report to the Principal's Office* features grade six student, Sunny Wyler, who will do just about anything to get herself suspended from school. Think back on some favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially fascinating **protagonist**? Who is your all time favorite **protagonist**?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

sinister	despicable	desolation	contorted
manuscript	architect	delinquent	hypnotized

1. Telling everyone that Maria had cooties was a very \_\_\_\_\_ thing to do.
2. Kelvin had a dazed look on his face, almost like he'd been \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We found an old \_\_\_\_\_ that appeared to be written by John Steinbeck.
4. Sheila \_\_\_\_\_ herself like a pretzel in order to fit into the cupboard.
5. Casey had a very \_\_\_\_\_ look on his face when he handed me the bubble gum.
6. A famous \_\_\_\_\_ designed that old mansion.
7. It won't be long until he becomes a juvenile \_\_\_\_\_.
8. With the closing of the factory, the town's \_\_\_\_\_ was complete.

# Questions



1. What is the setting of the story in Chapter Two?


2. Name the main character in each of the first three chapters.

Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	

3. Describe why Sunny and Hillary were so upset in Chapter One.


4. Why did the girls consider their own parents to be the worst offenders of the boomlet?


5. Describe your first impressions of the three characters introduced so far.

Sunny Wyler	
Eddie Mott	
T. Charles Brimlow	

6. Plumfield Middle School had a student population of \_\_\_\_\_. Is this bigger or smaller than the number of students in your school? \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Put yourself in Hillary's place and think of one positive thing about having Sunny for a friend, and one negative thing.

8. List Eddie's three-point plan to fit in, then add a possible fourth point he might have considered.

1	
2	
3	
4	

9. Describe how Eddie's first day at Plumfield got off to a rocky start.


10. What evidence is there in Chapter Three which would indicate that Mr. Brimlow takes his job very seriously?


11. If you were attending Plumfield and Mr. Brimlow greeted you at the door, what unique remark do you think he would have made to you? Why?


## Language Activities



**A.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is, *The runner retreated like a turtle's head*. What two things are being compared in this example?



--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a race car

--

b) the sound of a train's whistle

--

Look for a **simile** in the remaining chapters of the novel. When you find one return to this question and record it below.


**B.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device in which the same sound is repeated at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Three . . . *whipped out some staped sheets . . .*



Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A fire alarm	
A forest at night	
Your choice	

## C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters.

Word	Anagram	Clue
thrust		Far from falsehoods.
widen		___ and dined.
inches		Comfortable positions in life.
teacher		Dishonest one.
street		One who administers exams.
mister		Cancels or sets aside.
grade		Expressed a great deal of anger.
heart		A familiar planet.

**D. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example from this section: *Students, teachers, staff - they would bring it to life, give it heart and soul.*

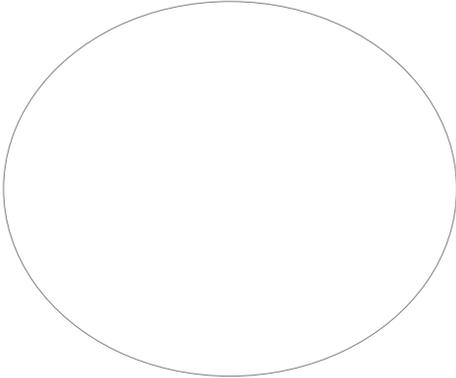


To what is Mister Brimlow referring in this sentence?

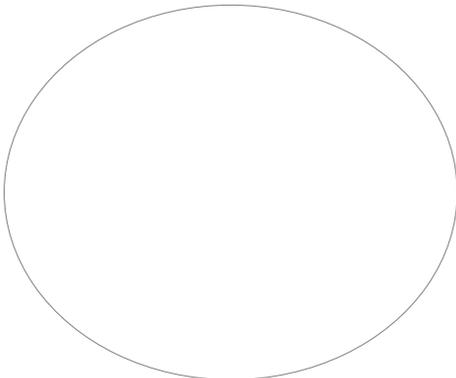

Create your own example of personification.


**E. 5 Ws and an H.**

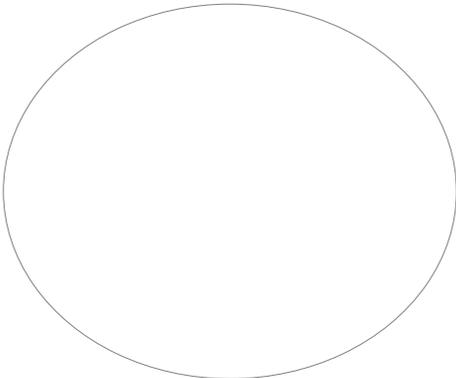
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



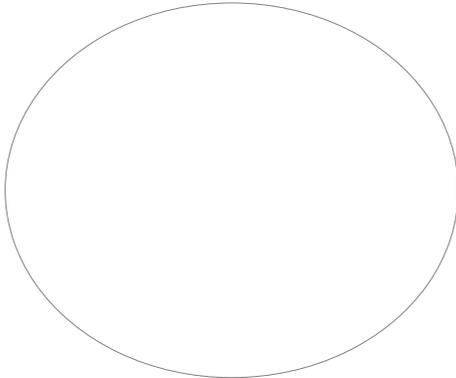
**WHO?**



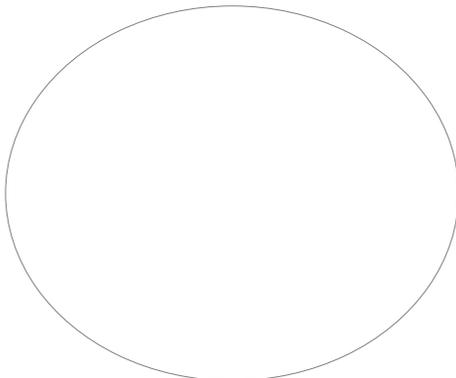
**WHAT?**



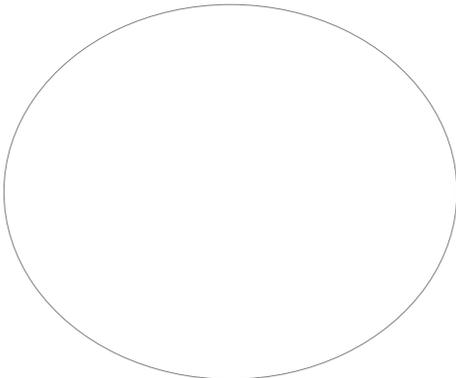
**WHEN?**



**WHERE?**



**WHY?**



**HOW?**

## Extension Activities



### A. Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in this section of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6

## B. The Quatrain Poem

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the poem *I Don't Like Change*, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I don't like change,  
When old is new,  
When glad is sad,  
And orange is blue.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABCA, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in this section of our novel (i.e. the first day of school, changes, principals, new schools, bullies, etc.)

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own quatrain poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: \_\_\_\_\_


Be sure to visit the author's fascinating website:

<http://jerryspinelli.com>