



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Stargirl

based on the book by

Jerry Spinielli

Written by

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## A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SPINELLI, Jerry 1941-Jerry Spinelli was born on February 1, 1941, in Norristown, Pennsylvania. While still a youngster, one of his poems about a hometown football team's victory was published in a local paper. This inspired him to consider a career as a writer. As an adult writer, he thought he should write about topics that would be interesting to adults. The publishers he approached were not interested in his work. After he married, he started writing about things his own children did. One incident, when his child ate some food he was saving for himself, was the inspiration for his first book, *Space Station Seventh Grade*.

*Space Station Seventh Grade* (Little, Brown, 1982) tells the daily life of Jason Herkimer. Jason deals with everyday incidents as well as serious issues such as his parents' divorce, and living with a stepfather. In the sequel, *Jason and Marceline* (Little, Brown, 1990), Jason and the trombone player, Marceline, develop a deeper, more caring, and romantic relationship.

*Who Put That Hair in My Toothbrush?* (Little, Brown, 1984) is the story of Megin and Greg, siblings who fight a lot but unite against a common threat. The story is told in first person, with chapters alternating between Megin and Greg.

*Maniac Magee* (Little, Brown, 1990) was the Newbery Medal winner in 1991. In this book, Spinelli deals with the absurdities of racism. Jeffrey Lionel Magee is a Caucasian boy who is orphaned at the age of three. He runs away from his aunt and uncle's tension-filled home, and lives with a succession of people. The first is a kind and loving black family. He leaves them when racist graffiti is sprayed on their home. Next he lives with an old man in the equipment room of the park, but the man dies. After that he lives with a racist, dysfunctional white family. Nicknamed Maniac because of his athletic feats, he tries to start better racial relationships between the blacks and whites. Maniac Magee also won the Boston Globe/Horn Book Award, 1990, American Library Association, 1991, and the D.C. Fisher Award, 1992.

Spinelli's other works include *Dump Days*, (Little, Brown, 1988), *The Bathwater Gang* (Little, Brown, 1990), *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock*, (Simon and Schuster, 1991), and *Fourth Grade Rats* (Scholastic, 1991.) He lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

## INTRODUCTION *Stargirl*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli. It includes eighteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

In the **introductory lesson** students review the format of a newspaper and look particularly at the “filler” items. Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain that Stargirl used the fillers in the newspaper to find out things about people so she could send them the appropriate cards or greetings. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit.

The **reading assignments** are approximately twenty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for several vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. It might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for several vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

Students are assigned to do a **project** with this unit. Students are members of the Sunflower Club, a club of students who pledges to do something nice each day for someone other than themselves. Students will try to keep this pledge and keep a list of what they did each day. After about two weeks, students will share their experiences with the class.

Two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

After students complete the discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. In the first assignment, students write to inform. They write a “filler” for the newspaper. In the second assignment, students write to persuade Leo to accept Stargirl OR persuade Stargirl to find a better way to fit in with the group OR persuade you that Leo and Stargirl acted appropriately in the book and wouldn't need to be persuaded to do anything differently. The third writing assignment gives students the opportunity to do some creative writing by writing the plot summary for a sequel to the novel *Stargirl*.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Stargirl*. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit tests** come in two formats: short answer and multiple choice. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test which is even more challenging.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **unit resource materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** immediately follow the **reproducible student materials**. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights. No other portion of this unit may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES *Stargirl*

1. Students will explore the theme of individuality/nonconformity.
2. Students will keep a log of the good deeds they do and share some of their experiences with the class.
3. Students will practice reading orally and silently.
4. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Stargirl*.
5. The writing assignments are designed for several purposes:
  - a. To check and increase students reading comprehension
  - b. To make students think about the ideas presented in the novel
  - c. To encourage logical thinking
  - d. To provide the opportunity for students to practice good grammar and improve their use of the language
  - e. To encourage students' creativity
6. Students will participate in group activities to improve their personal interaction skills.
7. Students will study vocabulary from the book to improve their own vocabularies.
8. Students will practice their public speaking skills.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *Stargirl*

Date Assigned	Chapters	Completion Date
	Porcupine Necktie-4	
	5-9	
	10-13	
	14-17	
	18-21	
	22-25	
	26-29	
	30-End	

UNIT OUTLINE *Stargirl*

<b>1</b> Introduction Project Assignment	<b>2</b> PVR Porcupine-4	<b>3</b> Study ?s P-4 PVR Chapters 5-9	<b>4</b> Study ?s 5-9 Hot Seat Interviews	<b>5</b> PVR Ch 10-13
<b>6</b> Study ?s 10-13 Writing Assignment 1 PVR Ch 14-17	<b>7</b> Study ?s 14-17 Speaker: Meditation & Yoga	<b>8</b> Library: Nonfiction Assignment PVR 18-21	<b>9</b> Study ?s 18-21 Nonfiction Reports PV 22-25	<b>10</b> Read 22-25 Prepare Sunflower Club Reports
<b>11</b> Study ?s 22-25 Sunflower Club Reports PVR 26-29	<b>12</b> Study ?s 26-29 PVR 30-End	<b>13</b> Study ?s 30-End Writing Assignment 2	<b>14</b> Extra Discussion Questions	<b>15</b> Extra Discussion Questions Writing Assignment 3
<b>16</b> Vocabulary Review	<b>17</b> Unit Review	<b>18</b> Unit Test		

**P=Preview the Study Questions**  
**V=Do the Vocabulary Worksheet**  
**R=Read**



## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To introduce *Stargirl* unit
2. To distribute books, study guides and other related materials

NOTE: Prior to this lesson, have a local newspaper available for each of your students for Activity #1.

### Activity #1

If your students are not familiar with newspapers, show them how they are put together—the various sections, the contents, the kinds of things included in the newspaper. Show them major news articles, personal interest stories, sports, weddings, obituaries, police beat, etc. Then, be sure to show them the filler portions—short pieces that fill out the columns, little bits of news, etc. These are usually particularly interesting in small, local papers.

Transition: Tell students that the main character of the book they are about to read makes it a point to read all those little filler parts and often sends people cards or does things for the people who are mentioned in the fillers—just as her way of being nice.

### Activity #2

Distribute the Project Assignment Sheet and discuss the directions in detail. Explain to students that they are all now members of the Sunflower Club, a club of people who at least once a day does something nice for someone else. They are to keep a log of the date and a short explanation of the nice thing that they did. Later in the unit, they will share with the class some of the more interesting things they did.

### Activity #3

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should preview the study guide questions before each reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in that section. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

Vocabulary Prior to reading a reading assignment, students will do vocabulary work related to the section of the book they are about to read. Following the completion of the reading of the book, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *Stargirl*

### PROMPT

Everyone has something going on in life that would make a good filler for the newspaper. A birthday may be coming up, your parents or grandparents may be having a wedding anniversary, you might be preparing for a special vacation, you may have an interesting hobby or have received an award for something, something interesting may have happened to you or someone you know—even something as common as slipping on ice on the way to school or incurring a minor injury in some way. Your assignment is to write a newspaper filler. It can be about yourself or someone you know, as long as you know enough details about the story to accurately write it.

### PREWRITING

Think about the thing that is your filler. Write down the answers to: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? or How? and jot down some concluding statement. Stop and think for a few minutes about what headline you might use, and jot down those ideas. Feel free to look back at your newspaper fillers to get ideas about what kinds of details might need to be included.

### DRAFTING

Choose your headline and write that at the top of the page. Then, in a paragraph, tell the story you have chosen as your filler. At the end, write your concluding statement. Keep in mind that this is a *filler*, not a lengthy feature story. A single, well-written paragraph is all you will write.

### PROMPT

After you have finished a rough draft of your filler article, revise it yourself until you are happy with your work. Then, ask a student who sits near you to tell you what he/she likes best about your work, and what things he/she thinks can be improved. Take another look at your ad keeping in mind your critic's suggestions, and make the revisions you feel are necessary.

### PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.

DUE DATE \_\_\_\_\_