



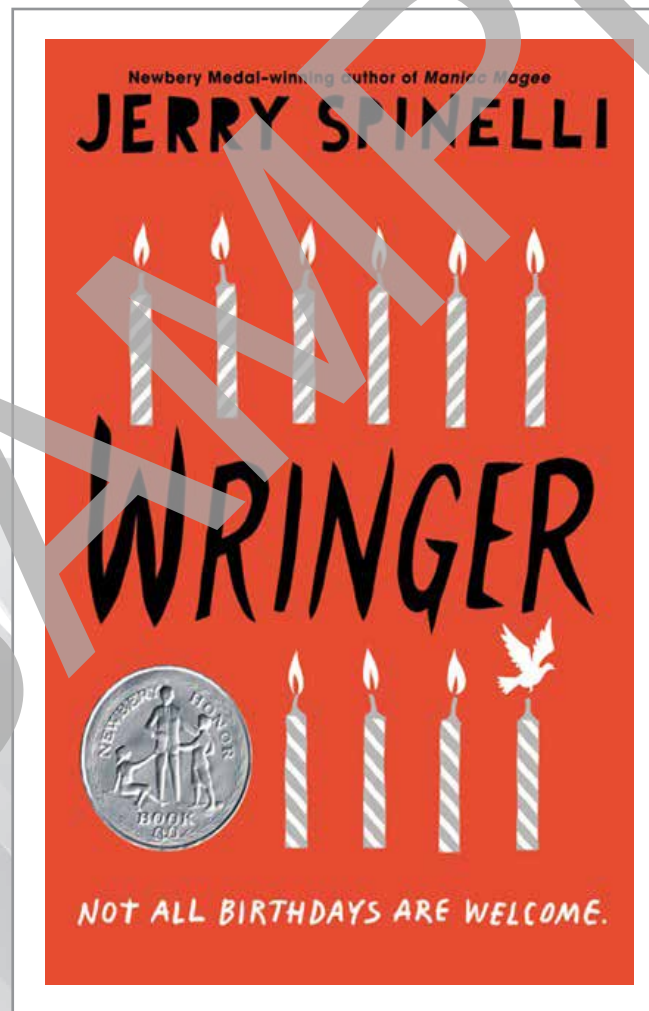
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Wringer

Jerry Spinelli



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

# Wringger

Jerry Spinelli

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Identifying attributes, research, compare/contrast, creative thinking, and critical thinking

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, foreshadowing, and anticipating

### Vocabulary

Target words, word maps, synonyms, antonyms, and context clues

### Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, interviewing, storytelling, discussion, and music

### Literary Elements

Literary analysis, setting, story mapping, plot development, and characterization

### Writing

Character journal, personal writing, newspapers, creative writing, and acrostic poetry

### Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—maps, research; Science, Math, Art—drawing, puppet making, design and color, diorama, collage, poetry, and comic strips

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## Summary

*Winger* tells the story of Palmer LaRue, a nine-year-old boy who is apprehensive about his tenth birthday. When a boy turns ten, he is ready to become a wringer, which is a sign of honor. Wringers are used in Palmer's hometown, Waymer, where they celebrate an annual Family Fest in which five thousand pigeons are used for target practice. Palmer does not want to be a wringer, but he does want to belong. Palmer must make some hard decisions and stop being afraid when he becomes attached to a pet pigeon.

## About the Author

Jerry Spinelli, a graduate of Gettysburg College, is an award-winning author of contemporary children's literature. Spinelli books include: *Maniac Magee*, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, *Jason and Marceline*, *Who Put That Hair in My Toothbrush?*, *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock*, *Crash*, and *The Library Card*. A father of six children, he often uses his own life experiences to write his novels. Jerry Spinelli's wife is also an author.

## Introductory Activities

1. **Previewing the book:** Have students look at the cover and answer the journalist's questions about what they see: Who? Where? What? and Why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. **Predicting the story:** Given the following clues, students write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.  
tradition                  father                  courage                  loyalty                  friendship
3. **Character Journal:** List the main characters from *Winger* and have students choose one. As they read the book, students should write regular journal entries from that character's point of view reflecting on the events of the story. At various points in their reading, have students share their journals with classmates.
4. **Attribute Web:** Create an Attribute Web (p. 8 of this guide) with students for each of the following ideas: friends, decision, bravery, love, and birthday. Ask students to quickly tell what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.
5. **Prediction Chart:** Have students set up a Prediction Chart (pp. 6-7 of this guide) to use as they read the book.
6. **Anticipation Questions:** Have students respond to each of the following statements with a "thumbs-up" (I agree) or a "thumbs-down" (I disagree) and discuss their responses.
  - Children should always do what their friends do.
  - You should never tell lies.
  - Secrets are made to tell.
  - It is wrong to kill for sport.
  - Friends should help and support each other.
  - You should think for yourself.
  - Love is shown in different ways.

## Vocabulary Activities

1. **Target Word Charades:** Have students act out some of the vocabulary words and have classmates guess the target word. Some suggested words for *Wringer*:

woozy (18)	befuddled (36)	wobbled (56)	ambled (83)
recoiled (100)	snickered (130)	leering (152)	cringed (173)
lurking (198)	rotated (213)		

2. **Target Word Maps:** Have students complete word maps for vocabulary words of a certain part of speech. For example adjectives from *Wringer* would include:

crusty (8)	fiery (59)	classic (67)	syrupey (69)
raucous (119)	dopey (162)	precious (182)	reconstituted (205)

*Word Map for an adjective*

Target word:

What does the word describe?

What are examples of when to use the word?

What does it mean?

Dictionary:

In Use:

In Use:

In Use:

3. **Sentences:** Have students select five or six vocabulary words and use as many of the words as possible in one sentence.

4. **Synonym Match:** Have students select vocabulary words from a chapter and list one synonym for each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper. Mix the papers and have the students match each synonym to the appropriate vocabulary word.

5. **Odd One Out:** Use vocabulary words from one or two chapters. Have the students make a chain of four words. One word in the chain is the vocabulary word, two words are synonyms for the vocabulary word, and one word does not go with the others. (Mix the sequence of the words in the chain.) Students should exchange their chains and underline the word that does not belong with the others and explain why it does not belong.

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## Section Nine, Chapters 33-36

### Vocabulary

whipped (180)	spectacularly (181)	blessedly (182)	precious (182)
wearily (184)	audible (185)	wicker (185)	transport (186)
spokes (186)	grazing (186)	sneered (187)	conscious (190)
deposit (191)	magically (192)	quivered (194)	bared (196)
privilege (197)	brazenly (197)	impression (198)	lurking (198)

### Discussion Questions

1. Why does Palmer think a bug is crawling down the middle of his back? What is it? *(He feels something sliding down his back. It is really sweat.)*
2. Why is Palmer hiding near the dumpster? *(Beans and the gang are chasing him because he refused to take The Treatment.)*
3. Why does the worker from the GreatGrocer store give Palmer a can of Sprite? *(The worker tells Palmer that he looks like he needs it.)*
4. Why doesn't Palmer wait until dark to make a run for home? *(He is worried about Nipper coming home and being hurt or killed by the gang.)*
5. Why does Palmer decide that Nipper has to go? *(Palmer realizes that Nipper is not safe at his house anymore.)*
6. Why is Dorothy crying? *(She is crying because Palmer says they must take Nipper out of the neighborhood in order to save his life.)*
7. Why do Palmer and Dorothy tell their parents they are going on a picnic? *(They don't want them to know that they have a pigeon.)*
8. Why does Palmer want to take Nipper as far away as he can? *(He tells Dorothy that pigeons can find their way back from a long way.)*
9. Why do Palmer and Dorothy pull off the road where horses are grazing? *(They stop to eat.)*
10. Why does Palmer ride Dorothy's bike in circles, figure eights, zigzags, and crazy doodles? *(Palmer wants to confuse Nipper so he will not be able to find his way back to Palmer's house.)*
11. How do you think Nipper gets back to Palmer's house first? *(Answers will vary.)*
12. How does Palmer believe that the gang will get Nipper? *(He thinks they will sneak the cat in, spy on the house, use a slingshot, or maybe use poison.)*
13. Why does Dorothy begin to laugh and tell Palmer to walk back and forth? *(She wants Palmer to see what Nipper is doing. Nipper is pacing, turning, and stopping exactly like Palmer.)*
14. Why do you think Palmer's mother confesses that she knows about Nipper? *(Answers will vary.)*

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15. How does Palmer explain how a new box of Honey Crunchers appeared in his closet whenever the old box was almost gone? *(He thinks that it is magic.)*
  16. Why does Palmer think that his father will be mad if he finds out about Nipper? *(Palmer thinks his father hates pigeons because he won the trophy for shooting pigeons.)*
  17. Why does Palmer's father come into his bedroom at night to look at Nipper? *(Answers will vary.)*
  18. Why does Palmer stay in bed until noon after Dorothy and her family leave for their vacation? *(He is sad because he sent Nipper away with Dorothy when she went on vacation with her parents.)*
  19. How does Dorothy carry Nipper over to her house? *(She refuses to use the shoebox and carries him across the street in her hands.)*
  20. Why do Beans and the gang begin to tease and taunt Palmer? *(They believe that Palmer still has a pigeon.)*
  21. Why does Palmer suggest that Henry come up to his bedroom? *(He wants to prove to the gang that the pigeon is gone.)*
  22. Why does Palmer tell Henry to quit the gang? *(Palmer thinks that Henry is better than Beans because he has seen Henry be meek and kind. Henry does not have a mean nature. He pulls his little sister in the wagon and warns Palmer about Beans' night visit by writing "tonight" on the cake icing at Palmer's party.)*

### Supplementary Activities

1. Art/Diorama: Have the students depict Palmer's bedroom including the pigeon and the yellow cat, or create any other scene or image based on the book. Encourage the students to be creative and to include as many details as they can in the diorama.
2. Social Studies/Map: Have the students draw a map of Palmer's neighborhood and surrounding area. The students should draw the pathway to where Palmer and Dorothy let Palmer go. The students should include a key and compass rose in their maps. Display the maps in the classroom.

## Section Ten, Chapters 37-40

### Vocabulary

cicada (199)	defenseless (200)	land mine (200)	platoon (200)
deployment (200)	crossfire (200)	fusillade (201)	regrouped (201)
semipro (201)	pureness (202)	macadam (202)	blotting (202)
tension (205)	reconstituted (205)	throttling (205)	intense (210)
pellets (211)	rotated (213)	sarcasm (223)	flexed (224)