

## Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Loser* by Jerry Spinelli.

1. What does Zinkoff wear his first day of school despite his mother telling him not to?
2. What does Miss Meeks calculate during her opening day speech?
3. What does his mother give Zinkoff to reward him? What does Miss Meeks make Zinkoff wear when he misbehaves?
4. When Zinkoff wins the soccer trophy, he offers to give it to Andrew. Why do you think he did this and what does it reveal about him? What does Andrew's reaction tell you about him?
5. How is Miss Meeks different than Mrs. Biswell? Compare how each views Zinkoff's handwriting.
6. Why can't Zinkoff go with his father on Take Your Kid to Work Day? Why is it important to Zinkoff? How does his father make it up to him?
7. When he is stuck at home after his operation, why does Zinkoff think about the Waiting Man? Why do you think Zinkoff gives himself a test? Does he learn anything about himself by doing his test?
8. Chapter 15 is titled, "Discovered." In what way is Zinkoff discovered? Why does it happen at this time and not before?
9. Who in the book do you think believes that Zinkoff is a loser? Who doesn't? Show examples to support your choices.
10. Why does Zinkoff spend Field Day with the old lady on Willow Street? How does this show Zinkoff's character?
11. Why do you think Bonce eventually calls Zinkoff's name at the end of the book? If Zinkoff was in your class would you be friends with him? What qualities does he have that would make him a good or bad friend?
12. Has anyone ever misjudged you or called you a name that hurt your feelings? What did you do? What do you think Zinkoff would do in your shoes? Would you still react the same way?

13. After Zinkoff writes Hector Binns' name as his best friend, how does Zinkoff try to make it true? Why doesn't it work? Compare their friendship to Zinkoff's relationship with Andrew Orwell and Claudia.
14. Why do you think Jerry Spinelli wrote a story about a "Loser?" How do you think the author feels about losing? Do you think that the 'winners' in the book are always the best? Explain.

Note: The literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-6; Application: 7-8; Analysis: 9-10; Synthesis: 11-12; Evaluation: 13-14.

### **Activities**

1. Imagine who you would cast in the movie version of *Loser*. Create a poster for your movie that illustrates a scene that would show what the movie is about.
2. Make a list of things you remember about different teachers you've had and what was different about each grade. Does any year or teacher stand out? Why? How do you think Zinkoff would have felt if he was in your class?
3. Make a timeline of events in Zinkoff's life in the book. Extend the timeline out to the future and guess what you think will happen to him in high school and beyond.

### **Other Books by this Author**

**Novels:** *Dump Days*, *Fourth Grade Rats*, *Knots in My Yo-Yo String*, *The Library Card*, *Maniac Magee*, *Stargirl*, *There's a Girl in My Hammocklock*, *Wringer*, *School Daze* series: *Report to the Principal's Office*, *Who Ran My Underwear Up The Flagpole?*, *Do the Funky Pickle*, *Picklemania*

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