

Smiles to Go



By

Jerry Spinelli

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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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.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on several short chapters of *Smiles to Go* and is comprised of these distinct sections:

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

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

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 *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

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

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the nature of time, courage, chess and competition, the importance of friends and family, the complexity of (romantic and sibling) relationships, personal growth, and coming of age.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Identification of root words
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*.
10. Identify *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 Plot Outline for a Sequel
5. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
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. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. 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

Ninth grader Will Tupence is in control.

He plans everything obsessively, from the perfect stargazing night with his crush, Mi-Su, to the regular Saturday-night games of Monopoly with his friends. He's even planned his entire adulthood: career as an astronomer; mint condition, black 1985 Jaguar XJS/12; two kids. . . .

But everything changes the day Will learns one startling fact: protons—those tiny atomic particles, the building blocks to the building blocks of life—can die. The one thing that was so certain in this world to Will has an expiration date.

And Will's carefully planned-out life?

Not so certain, either. [Courtesy of 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]



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade / Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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Start – Start of PD3



Before you read this section:

The **protagonist** of *Smiles to Go* is Will Tuppence, a grade nine student who loves science and astronomy, but whose world is suddenly changed when he finds out that protons can actually die. Think back on your own life and see if you can come up with something you (perhaps unexpectedly) learned, that rocked your world. Why was this such a life-altering event for you?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

molecule	proton	electron	atom
extract	decay	vandalism	supersensitive

1. Everyone was upset at the _____ which took place in our school.
2. A/an _____ is a group of atoms bonded together.
3. We all try to be on our best behavior around Natasha as she is _____.
4. The smallest particle of an element that is seen as the tiny building block of everything is a/an _____.
5. The plumber will try to _____ the ball from the drainage pipe.
6. A/an _____ contains a positive electrical charge.
7. A piece of fruit left on a window ledge will eventually _____.
8. A/an _____ is a stable subatomic particle with a charge of negative electricity.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of the first chapter?

2. Why did Will find it so fascinating to spend time with Jim?

3. What did Jim say was so extraordinary about the proton? How was this proved wrong in the second chapter?

4. Why do you think Will found this news so earth-shattering?

5. Describe your impression of Mi-Su? Do you think you would like having her as a close friend? Why or why not?

6. Where did make the discovery of the death of a proton take place?

7. BT stood for _____, who according to Will was always _____.

8. How would you describe the different Monopoly strategies of Will and BT?

Will	
BT	

9. What big news did BT drop on his friends during the Monopoly game?

10. What do you think the fact that BT seems to find it amusing to have his friends say disparaging things about him says about his personality?

11. As this section ends, Will realizes he is upset about three recent events. What are they?

1	
2	
3	

12. **Investigate:** The title of this novel, *Smiles to Go*, is a “take-off” from a line in the famous poem, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, by Robert Frost. What line from this poem did Jerry Spinelli “use” to create this title?

--

Language Activities



A. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Why is the following an example of personification: *Last time, some of your anchovy fumes crawled over my pizza?*



Invent your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

B. Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Although alliteration is usually seen as a series of words beginning with the same consonant (i.e. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*), the following also serves as an example of this literary device: *I landed on Park Place.*

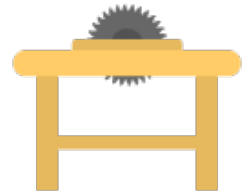


Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

The proton.	
Skateboarding down a hill.	
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:



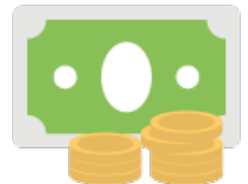
a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in this section of **Smiles to Go**.

Word	Anagram	Clue
miles		Ooze.
spoon		Pry.
slipper		Wavelets.
toaster		Goes around.
finger		Edging.
sister		Withstand.
proton		Tout de suite. (French)

D. Monopoly ~ The Board Game

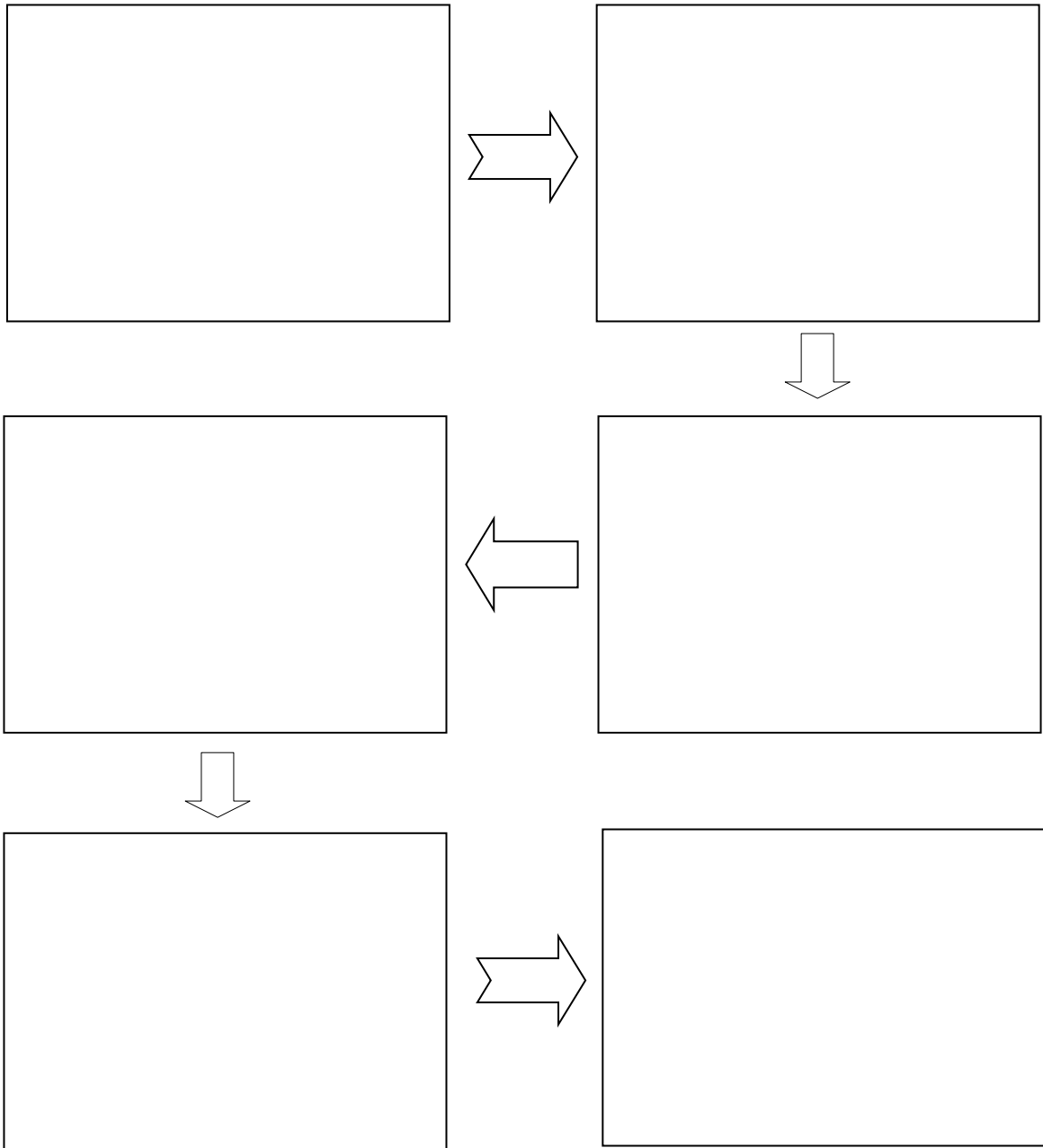
Will and his friends enjoy a good game of Monopoly. Did you know that this popular board game originated over 100 years ago in 1903 by Lizzie Magie. She called it *The Landlord's Game*. Today the game is popular in many different countries using their particular currencies. There are also an almost endless number of different versions (i.e. *The Big Bang Theory Edition*). Using information found in your school library or on the Internet research three additional facts about this fascinating (and time-consuming) board game.



1	
2	
3	

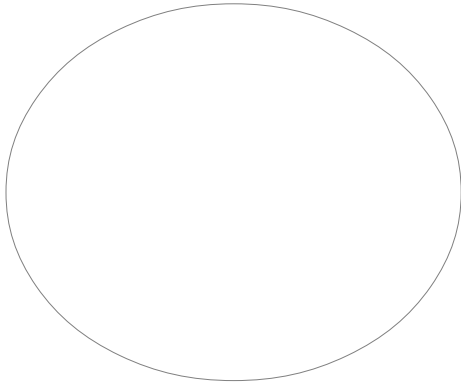
E. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.

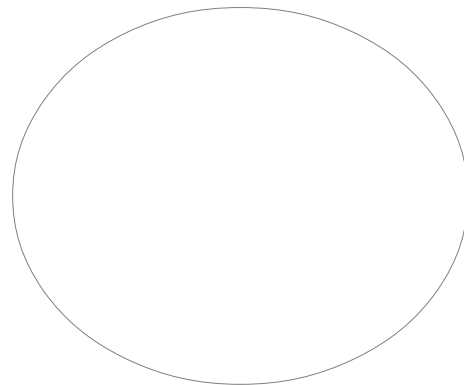


F. 5 Ws and an H.

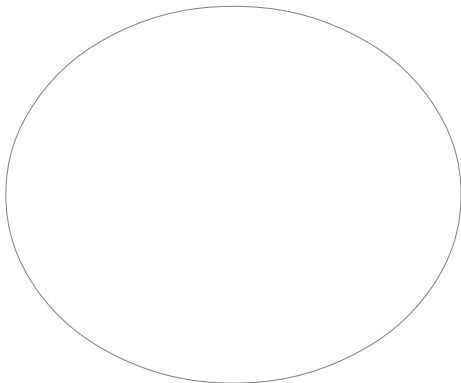
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



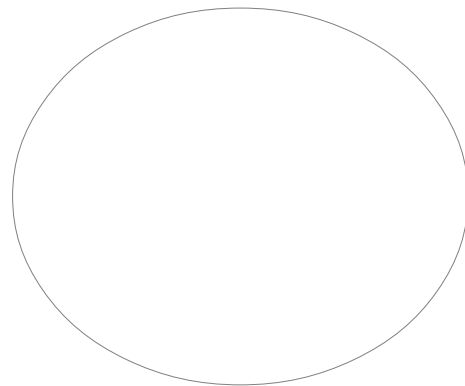
WHO?



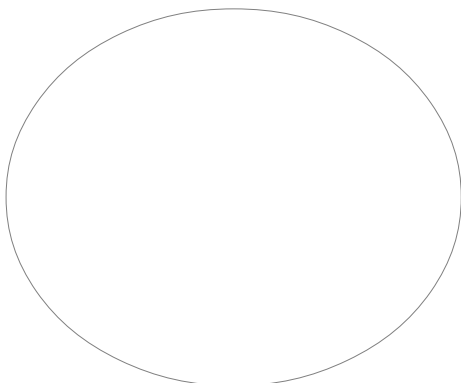
WHAT?



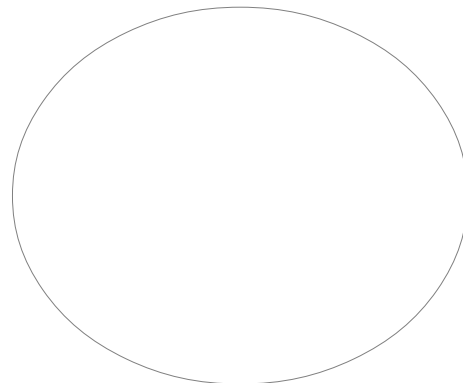
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words



Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.

Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture:	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: