

# The Library Card



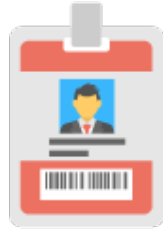
By

Jerry Spinelli

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

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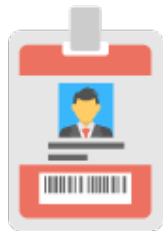
**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on three or four chapters of **The Library Card** and is comprised of the following different activities:

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

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.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 peer pressure, books/knowledge can change lives, the importance friends and friendship, identity and creativity, perseverance when facing difficult circumstances.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*
8. Identify *anagrams*
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. 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. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

### Character Activities

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

### Creative and Critical Thinking

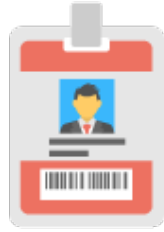
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Complete an Observation Chart
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

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

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## Synopsis

Brenda, Sonseray, and April have nothing in common . . . until a mysterious blue card appears as if by magic and begins to change each of their lives. None of them guesses it at first, but that strange blue card will be their ticket to the past – and to a future they never imagined.

In stories that range from humorous to heartbreaking, Newbery Medal winner, Jerry Spinelli reveals the amazing possibilities lurking behind library doors. (The publisher)

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: <http://thenovelworld.com/2010/02/12/the-library-card-review/>

## Author Biography

*Jerry Spinelli*

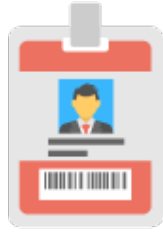
Jerry Spinelli published his first book, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, in 1982, when he was forty-one years old. Since then he has written more than 20 novels, including *Maniac McGee* and *Wringer* (Newbery Medal, 1991). Before he became a full-time writer Jerry worked as a menswear editor for a department store magazine and served in the United States Naval Reserve. He wrote during his lunch breaks, after dinner, and on week-ends. Publishers rejected his first novels, but Jerry kept writing. Fifteen years later, his first book was accepted and published. Jerry still calls that book, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, his favorite of all his novels.



Jerry lives in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania – just ten miles from the town where he grew up – with his wife and fellow author, Eileen Spinelli. Together they have six children and sixteen grandchildren. You can read more about Jerry on his website [www.jerryspinelli.com](http://www.jerryspinelli.com) (Summary adapted from the publisher)

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## Student Checklist

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

# The Library Card



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Name:

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## Part One Chapters 1-3



### Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of Part I of *The Library Card* is Mongoose, a rather troubled twelve-year-old boy who as the story opens, is busy shoplifting at the local Mini-Mart with his pal, Weasel. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

simmer	detention	careened	convertible
mangled	substitute	definitely	imaginary

1. The crowd watched in horror as the race car \_\_\_\_\_ into the grandstand.
2. I think it is cute that little Nicholas has an \_\_\_\_\_ friend.
3. John Simmons is \_\_\_\_\_ in the running to become our next mayor.
4. Trisha picked the \_\_\_\_\_ piece of paper up from the floor.
5. The 1966 hardtop \_\_\_\_\_ Mustang is a rare find indeed.
6. Grandma Gertie let the pot \_\_\_\_\_ on the stove for about twenty minutes.
7. The prisoner was kept in secure \_\_\_\_\_ for the night.
8. We had a \_\_\_\_\_ teacher for the entire week.



# Questions



1. What is the **setting** at the beginning of Chapter One?


2. Why do you think Mongoose decided to steal the candy from the Mini-Mart?

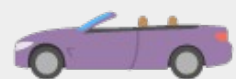

3. Describe what Weasel did to be suspended from school for two days. Do you think this was a fair punishment? Why or why not?


4. What unusual item did Mongoose find in his pocket? What happened to it in Chapter Two?


5. Weasel dreamed of getting a convertible \_\_\_\_\_ car after leaving school, while Mongoose dreamed of getting a \_\_\_\_\_.

## Good to Know

Weasel and Mongoose have expensive taste in automobiles. Purchased brand new, Mongoose's choice is priced at between \$53,000 and \$100,000. Weasel's choice was manufactured between 1967 and 2002. A convertible in mint condition goes for about \$10,000.

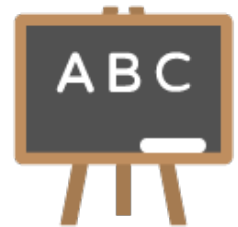


6. If you were going to nickname yourself after the name of an animal, which animal would you choose? Why?


7. How does Chapter Three end on a rather mysterious note?


## Language Activity

**A.** Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Here's one such example: from Chapter Two “. . . cupcakes, coffee cakes...”



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

A gasp of surprise.	
The sound of two bicycles colliding.	
The yelp of a puppy.	

**B.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is “And lo and behold here was Weasel . . . straight as a drill sergeant...”

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 frog jumping onto a lily pad

--

b) a little girl tossing a horse shoe

--

### **C. What is Your First Impression?**

Mongoose and Weasel certainly aren't your typical, everyday heroes. The novel opens with the boys shoplifting in a local store, and the section ends with them planning an act of vandalism with spray paint cans. What is your impression of the two boys thus far in the story? Predict what you think will happen to them as the novel continues.


## D. Cinquain Poems

A Cinquain poem has five lines and most often does not rhyme. Write two Cinquain poems describing two of the characters from *The Library Card* using what you know about them from this novel. With your teacher's permission you may wish to collaborate with a colleague in the creation of these poems.

<p>Line 1 is one word. Line 2 is two words. Line 3 is three words. Line 4 is four words. Line five is one word.</p>	<p><i>Santa Saint Nick Long white beard Christmas Eve present-giver Jolly</i></p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Character 1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Character 2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

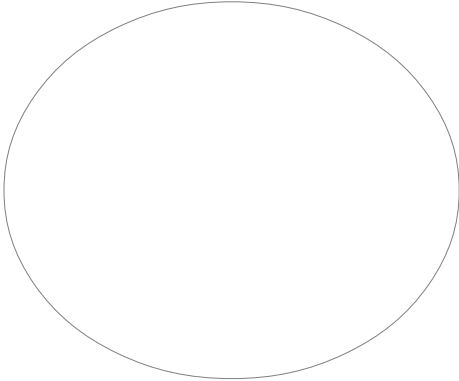
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\_\_\_\_\_

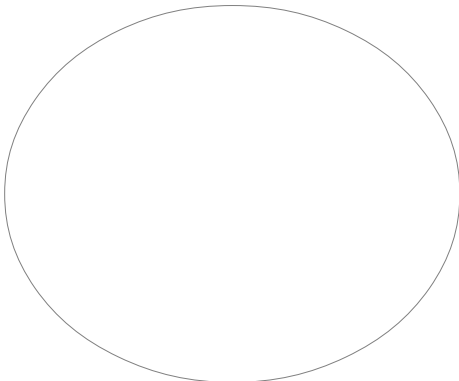
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**E. 5 Ws and an H.**

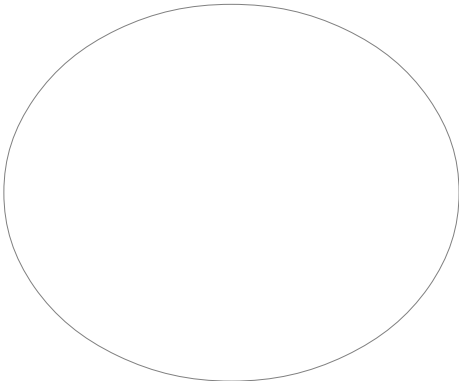
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



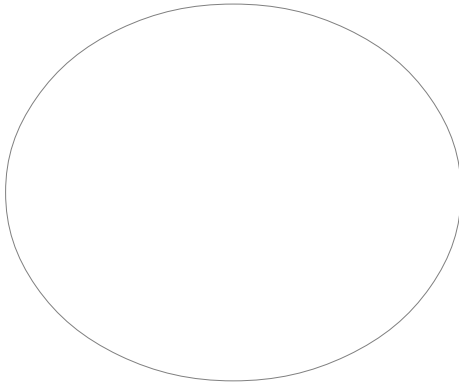
***WHO?***



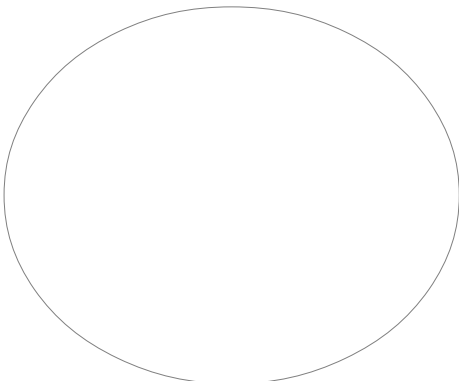
***WHAT?***



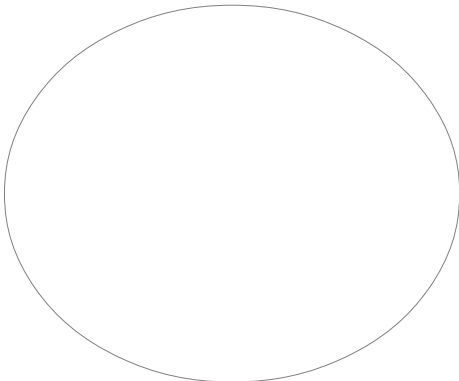
***WHEN?***



***WHERE?***



***WHY?***



***HOW?***

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first three chapters of *The Library Card*. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6