

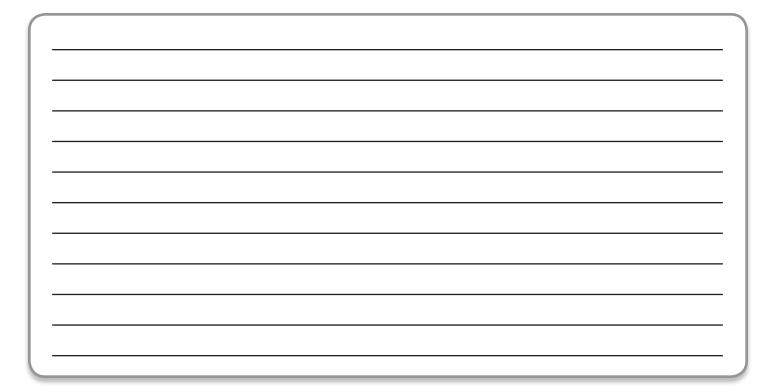


Activity One - Investigate Bullying

Bullying can be a very serious problem for some people. Zinkoff experienced this, especially after his first Field Day. **Your task is to investigate and write a one-page report on this important topic.** You may wish to consider the following:

- How a bully becomes a bully
- How a bully can make you feel
- · What to do about bullies
- Taking the "Bully Pledge"
- · Types of bullying
 - physical bullying
 - verbal bullying
 - relationship bullying
- Other great novels / movies on this theme
- How being bullied can affect one's health
- Relevant statistics
- Personal stories (either yourself or friends who have experienced bullying).

Thirty percent (30%) of students in grades six through ten are involved in moderate or frequent bullying — as bullies, as victims, or as both!





Activity Two Field Day Frolics!

This activity might work best with students working in pairs or small groups.

Poor Zinkoff was involved in two rather traumatic **Field Events** at his school. Although most students take events like a Field Day for granted, there is an awful lot of work that goes into organizing one.

Your task is to put together a Field Day. The school you are organizing it for is a school of 120 students in grades 4-6. The event is to last for about two hours (1 to 3 pm). It must have at least 10 events that students of this age would enjoy. You are to establish the number of students per team, and devise the activities for the different events. There

should be a good variety in the activities (i.e. not all races), and should appeal to a variety of ability levels. This will probably require some research on your part (you might consider the Internet)

Your final task is quite tricky. You are to create a timetable for the afternoon. This means that you will have to estimate how long each event will take and schedule a rotation of the teams through the events so that they compete against different teams for most events.

Good luck and have fun.

Consider this...

How would you make sure that a student in a wheelchair was able to participate in the events you plan?





Activity Two Take Me to the Movies

Many children's novels have been made into popular movies (*Bridge to Terabithia, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to name just two). **Imagine that Loser is about to be made into a Hollywood movie and you have been asked to write one of the scenes.**

Choose your favorite scene from the novel (it shouldn't be too long). By carefully following the description of the scene in the novel, transfer this into "script format". (You may want to investigate further as to how a script is set up by looking it up on the Internet, or checking out a play like *The Miracle Worker* by William Gibson.)

Your script should have stage directions and any other helps you may want to include to direct the actors so that you will have the scene performed just the way you want it. You may also wish to indicate who you would like to play each of the parts (either classmates or Hollywood actors).

As a bonus activity, you can perform the scene for the other students in your class as a Readers Theater!

Have fun.





Activity Four - Grow up, Will You!

We often hear adults say things like that to kids, as if they can't wait for their kids to grow up and get out of their hair. Growing up, in fact, is what the novel, *Loser*, is all about – Zinkoff growing up - from a little kid in grade one to a young boy in Middle School.

Loser is made up of a variety of events in Zinkoff's life: delivering the mail with his dad; playing soccer; overcoming his fear of the Furnace Monster; coping with various teachers . . .

If Jerry Spinelli was to write a biography of <u>your</u> life, what events would you want him to consider for his book? Think back over the last few years of your life and some of the adventures you have experienced. **Make a list of at least eight events that you would want included in such a biography. Write a brief description of each event and an explanation of why you chose that particular incident. Try to choose a variety of things (i.e. humorous, sad, exciting, etc.). Finally, compare your list with a classmate and explain why you selected the items you did.**





Activity Five - From Loser to Hero!

Zinkoff performs a rather heroic deed in the closing chapters of this novel and as such wins the admiration of many people in his neighborhood and school. **The dictionary defines a hero as** *one that shows great courage*.

Consider what it took for Zinkoff to act heroically. He actually put his own safety in peril while he searched the streets for little Claudia. Nowhere in the description of these events does it mention Zinkoff ever considering what he will gain personally by staying out in the storm searching for the little girl.

Think of someone that <u>you</u> consider to be a hero. It may be a person you know, or someone you read or heard about. Research the facts of this person's life and heroic deeds and write a one-page report. If you can, be sure to describe what was going on in the person's mind during this incident, and why he or she acted in the way they did.





Activity Six - Autism

Although the author makes no mention of it in his novel, some readers and reviewers believe Zinkoff to be mildly **autistic**. It is possible that these readers may be correct in stating this, but perhaps not.

Your task is to research the main characteristics of autism and compare these to what you know about Zinkoff. One strategy is to create a checklist of principal characteristics of the disorder, and then decide whether Zinkoff fits the description or not. You should try to come up with about a half-dozen important characteristics before bringing Zinkoff into the picture.

In conclusion, you should then make an informed decision as to whether you consider Zinkoff to be mildly autistic. Be sure to support your final decision by referring back to your checklist.

You may want to do this with a partner so you will have someone to discuss these characteristics with.