



***Stargirl* Excerpt: Comprehension Quiz** **(Teacher and Student Versions)**

Excerpt: *Stargirl*

By Jerry Spinelli, 2002



 Level 1 Difficulty

6 Min Read

Reading Skills: Big Picture, Inference, Words in Context

Writing Skills: Explanatory/Informational

About the Text

Stargirl (2000) is a popular young adult novel by Jerry Spinelli. Told from the perspective of Leo, an 11th grader at an Arizona high school, the story begins when a free-spirited new student named Stargirl baffles the other students with her unusual appearance and behavior. Soon her popularity at the new school surges—then quickly plummets. She is shunned, leading Leo, now her boyfriend, to pressure her to fit in. Realizing that conforming isn't working, Stargirl returns to her old, quirky self. Leo has trouble accepting her and only later, after Stargirl has left town, realizes his mistake. The novel celebrates nonconformity and warns of the perils of trying to fit in.

This excerpt, the novel's first chapter, introduces Leo. After a seemingly unrelated anecdote about an anonymously sent porcupine necktie, the story jumps forward a few years. On the first day of class, the school is buzzing about a new girl named Stargirl, who dresses strangely and carries a ukulele. During lunch, she begins playing and singing, stunning the other students. At the end of the chapter, Leo and his friend Kevin make a plan to have Stargirl as a guest on their school TV show "Hot Seat."



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Comprehension Quiz Implementation Guide

1) Read the Text

Quiz questions are based on the beginning of the story, up to the end of paragraph 11 ("I have other...").

Have students read the excerpt in their own hard copies or at:

<https://commonreads.com/book/?isbn=9780440416777>

2) Assign the Quiz

Printable student and teacher versions (with answer key) are below.

*Optional: Assign the writing prompt to be completed after the multiple choice questions.

3) Grading and Review

The teacher version includes correct answer explanations. A detailed writing prompt scoring guide and rubric are included.



Student Quiz - Excerpt: *Stargirl*

By Jerry Spinelli, 2000

Q1. Whose point of view is the story told from?

- A. Stargirl's
- B. Leo's
- C. Kevin's
- D. The reader's

Q2. Leo sees Stargirl as someone who...

- A. tries hard to be unusual and fun.
- B. is too odd to make friends with the students at his high school.
- C. is unlikely to become one of his friends.
- D. acts in a free and unexpected way.

Q3. What quote from the excerpt best shows the mood in this part of the story?

- A. "Stone silence all around." (paragraph 36, "She did not...")
- B. "Did you see her?" (paragraph 8, "Did you...")
- C. "We slammed hands." (paragraph 42, "We slammed...")
- D. "We were all being watched." (paragraph 7, "At the...")



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Writing Prompt - Excerpt: *Stargirl*

When Leo arrives at school on the first day of 11th grade, everyone asks him, “Did you see her?” (paragraph 8, “Did you see...”). They’re talking about the new student, Stargirl, who is different from other students. How is she different? What do the other students think of her? What does Leo think of her and how does he describe her? Explore the author's purpose in this opening scene by explaining both how Leo feels about Stargirl’s difference and how that makes you, the reader, feel about her.

Be sure to:

- Write a thesis statement or topic sentence that clearly states your main idea.
- Use textual evidence and supporting details from the article to develop your ideas.
- Follow a logical organizational structure that connects your ideas clearly.



Teacher Quiz Answer Key - Excerpt: *Stargirl*

By Jerry Spinelli, 2000

Q1. Whose point of view is the story told from?

A. Stargirl's

wrong: I can see why you might guess this, but Leo is telling a story about himself, his friends at school, his home, and Stargirl.

B. Leo's

✓ ***right: The story is told by Leo. Leo uses the word "I" as he tells it.***

C. Kevin's

wrong: Interesting guess, but Leo tells the story, and Kevin is one of Leo's friends.

D. The reader's

wrong: That might be an interesting idea, but the story is told in the first person ("I" point of view), not the second person ("you" point of view). Leo is telling the story.

Q2. Leo sees Stargirl as someone who...

A. tries hard to be seen as unusual and fun.

wrong: Nice guess, but the narrator does not suggest that Stargirl is acting this way for appearance's sake.

B. is too odd to make friends with the students at his high school.

wrong: I can see why you might guess this since Leo says Stargirl seems different from other girls in school (paragraph 37, "And now..."), but he doesn't suggest that she is too unusual to make friends.



C. is unlikely to become one of his friends.

wrong: That's a good guess, as Leo seems really curious about Stargirl and surprised by her. But there's nothing in this chapter to tell us that she won't become one of his friends.

D. acts in a free and unexpected way.

✓ right: In paragraph 36 ("Suddenly Kevin's..."), Leo says, "The girl was picking up her ukulele. And now she was strumming it. And now she was singing!" Leo sounds both surprised and excited by what she does in the cafeteria.

Q3. What quote from the excerpt best shows the mood in this part of the story?

A. "Stone silence all around." (paragraph 36, "She did not...")

wrong: Close. This sentence shows you the way people are watching her closely, but not the excitement she causes.

B. "Did you see her?" (paragraph 8, "Did you...")

✓ right: This sentence captures how curious Leo is about Stargirl and how surprising she is to all the students.

C. "We slammed hands." (paragraph 42, "We slammed...")

wrong: Good guess, but this sentence is about Leo's relationship with Kevin, and that's only a small part of what's going on here.

D. "We were all being watched." (paragraph 7, "At the...")

wrong: Interesting idea, but this quote is a little spooky and doesn't give you a sense of the excitement Stargirl has brought to the school.



Teacher Writing Prompt Response Key - Excerpt: *Stargirl*

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Student Writing Prompt

When Leo arrives at school on the first day of 11th grade, everyone asks him, “Did you see her?” (paragraph 8, “Did you see...”). They’re talking about the new student, Stargirl, who is different from other students. How is she different? What do the other students think of her? What does Leo think of her and how does he describe her? Explore the author’s purpose in this opening scene by explaining both how Leo feels about Stargirl’s difference and how that makes you, the reader, feel about her.

Response Key

Response Thesis Statement

The thesis statement should explain how Leo feels about Stargirl’s differences and how Leo’s impression affects the reader’s feelings, e.g.:

- *Leo is surprised and intrigued by Stargirl’s differences from the other students, causing us, as readers, to feel the same.*

Response Evidence and Support

Strong responses will use details from the text as support.

Details from the text about the other students’ reactions to Stargirl:

- All the students are asking “Did you see her?” on the first day of school, referring to Stargirl.



- They are already baffled by her name: “I turned to the senior slouched behind me. ‘Stargirl?’ I said. ‘What kind of name is that?’”
- Students seem curious and baffled by her:
 - “The lunchroom was dead silent as she walked by.”
 - “Half the lunchroom kept staring, half started buzzing.”
 - “Heads swung, eyes followed her, mouths hung open. Disbelief.”
 - “No one sat with her, but at the tables next to hers kids were cramming two to a seat. She didn't seem to notice. She seemed marooned in a sea of staring, buzzing faces.”

Details from the text that include Leo’s description of Stargirl:

- “She wore an off-white dress so long it covered her shoes. It had ruffles around the neck and cuffs and looked like it could have been her great-grandmother's wedding gown.”
- Kevin explains that Stargirl was homeschooled before now.
- He and Kevin are surprised by her actions: “Suddenly Kevin's eyes boggled. The girl was picking up her ukulele. And now she was strumming it. And now she was singing!”
- “Mostly she looked like a hundred other girls in school, except for two things. She wore no makeup, and her eyes were the biggest I had ever seen, like deer's eyes caught in headlights.”
- Kevin and Leo are excited about interviewing Stargirl: “Kevin held up his hands and framed a marquee in the air. ‘Hot Seat! Coming Attraction — Stargirl!’ I slapped the table. ‘Yes!’”

Details from Leo’s description of Stargirl, affecting the reader’s impression of her:

- Leo is interested in learning more about her.
- He worries students will start making fun of her.