

# A Teaching Unit for Jerry Spinelli's *Love, Stargirl*



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## *Love, Stargirl ~ Table of Contents*

January 1 – January 15	Irony; Stargirl's Poem	6
January 16 – February 14	Realistic Dialogue; Discussion; Text Interpretation; Fluency Practice	7
<b>February 18 – March 6</b>	<b>Extended Metaphors</b>	<b>8</b>
March 10 – March 23	Idioms, Writing a Friendly Letter; Fluency Practice	10
March 24 – April 1	Haiku	12
April 2 – May 26	Create a Classified Ad; Meet the Face from the Dumpster	13
<b>May 28 – June 16</b>	<b>Figurative Language</b>	<b>14</b>
June 18 – July 18	Imagery; Discussion	15
Test 1 – January 1 – July 18		16
Answer Key 1 – January 1 – July 18		19
July 19 – August 3	Allusion; Oxymoron	23
To The Teacher: Reader's Theater		24
August 3	Reader's Theater	25
August 8 – August 21	Discussion; Writing a Friendly Letter	26
August 23 – August 24	Strong Verbs	28
<b>August 25 – September 1</b>	<b>Poetry Elements</b>	<b>29</b>
September 3 – September 7	Non-Fiction Passage Analysis	30
September 8 – September 29	Mood	31
<b>Test 2 – July 19 – September 29</b>		<b>32</b>
Answer Key 2 – July 19 – September 29		34
October 5 – October 8	Perry Explains Why Stargirl is Interesting	38
October 9 – October 18	Meet the New Employee	39
October 9 – October 18	Silent Passage Analysis	40
October 20 – November 1	Create a Comic Strip	42
November 5 – November 13	Flashback	44
November 15 – November 24	Fluency Practice; Alliteration Review; Symbolism	45
November 25 – November 29	Writing Opportunity – An Essay	46
December 3 – December 20	Conflict	48
December 23 – January 2	Theme	49
Discussion Questions		50
Literary Elements Scavenger Hunt		51
Character Analysis		52
Silent Passage Analysis		53
Test 3 – October 5 – January 2		55
Answer Key 3 - October 5 – January 2		60

**The highlighted chapters are yours free. Scroll down to print these free lessons!**

***Love, Stargirl***  
February 18 – March 6

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension**

1. What anniversary is on February 18? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is Margie's? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is Alvina? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who bothers Alvina? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the topic of Stargirl's poem from her field trip to Maggie's? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who does Stargirl miss most from Arizona? \_\_\_\_\_

**Extended Metaphor**

An extended metaphor is a [metaphor](#) (a comparison where one thing is called another) that continues into the sentences that follow. On page twenty-nine, there is an extended metaphor. Reread the following passage:

*... Is there anything uglier or sadder than a ten-day old snow dump? It's not even snow anymore. It's slush.  
Was that beginning to be us, Leo? I'd rather never see you again than have that happen. **We were once so fresh, a dazzling snowfield.** Let's promise to each other that if we ever meet again **we will never plow and push our new-fallen snow. We will not become slush.** We will stay like this field and **melt away together only in the sun's good time.***

The metaphor begins with **We were once so fresh, a dazzling snowfield**. She is talking about her relationship with Leo, of course. Then, the author extends this metaphor by weaving in the bolded words that go along with snow. An extended metaphor does not just exist in prose (paragraphs). They are often found in poetry as well. The lines from the passage could be made to look like a poem.

We were once so fresh, a dazzling snowfield.  
Let's promise to each other  
that if we ever meet again  
we will never  
plow and push  
our new-fallen snow.  
We will not  
become slush.  
We will stay like this field  
and  
melt away  
together  
only in the sun's  
good time.

**You try it!**

It is easy to create an extended metaphor. Let's try one as a poem.

Start with this metaphor: **Life is a snowflake.**

Now, write a list of things, sights, sounds, experiences that come to mind when you think of a **snowflake**.

Finally, write your poem. Let your first line be *Life is a snowflake*. Then, weave in the words that you listed throughout your poem.

Life is a snowflake

## Sample Extended Metaphor Poem

Step one: Make a list of words that you associate with a snowflake.

Life is a snowflake

Cold  
Beautiful  
Unique  
Unexpected  
Fun  
Delicate  
Peaceful  
Blizzard  
Dusting

Step 2: Write the poem. Begin with the metaphor, and weave in the words you have listed.

### **Life**

Life is a snowflake.  
It has its share of unexpected events  
but it is also  
delicate and beautiful!  
If you will just keep your  
eye on what's important  
and keep warm during the cold times,  
those blizzards won't keep you down.  
And the  
uniqueness  
is all that really counts  
in each season  
of life.

***Love, Stargirl***  
**May 28 – June 16**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension**

1. The name of the lemon thief is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Who took Dootsie's donut while she was in the donut shop? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When Stargirl tried to wash her mind on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, what caused her to be unsuccessful?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is Maiden's Leap? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did Stargirl order a strawberry-banana smoothie? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does Stargirl do differently with the graveyard donuts to get Charlie to take them? \_\_\_\_\_

**Figurative Language**

Writers use figurative language to make their writing more interesting and effective. By using a simile, metaphor, or personification, the writer is able to paint a picture in the mind of the reader.

Simile – a comparison of two things using the words *like, as, or than*

Metaphor – calls one thing another

Personification- gives a nonhuman object human traits

Hyperbole – an extreme exaggeration

Idiom – a commonly used expression that means something totally different than what it says

Complete the following chart to examine the figurative language used in the first portion of the book.

Page #	Passage	Type of figurative language	What it means
9	. . .if he were a Snow White dwarf, he would be Droopy. . .		
29	I saw the first flower of the year today. A crocus, peeking out from under a bush . . .		
33	. . . look at you, sniveling like a baby over some immature kid in Arizona. . .		
56	. . . If you start by hating one or two people, you won't be able to stop. Pretty soon you'll hate a hundred people...even a zillion.		
56	. . .hatred ...it grows and grows. . .it's hungry.		
63	His skin looked as if it had been toasted in the Arizona desert.		
72	. . .eyes gleaming like a surprised fox's. . .		

***Love, Stargirl***  
**August 25 – September 1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension**

1. What does Stargirl feel is her second language? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What happens on August 29<sup>th</sup>? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where does Stargirl go on her first field trip of the new year? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many more porch lights have been turned on early on Thursday mornings? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What does Stargirl do with an orange that is somewhat strange? \_\_\_\_\_

**Poetry Elements**

Stargirl's letters to Leo include many poems – some are written on purpose – others are written by accident. For example, reread the beginning of her August 25 letter. The first paragraph sounds like a poem! Look at it here rewritten to look like a poem.

The mockingbird does not dump me.  
The mockingbird has no harem.  
The mockingbird takes nothing,  
Demands nothing.  
The mockingbird does nothing  
But give –  
Give its song.

Here, Stargirl is really depending on the mockingbird to make herself feel better. She reveals to us that even with her troubles with Leo and Perry, she can find happiness in something as simple and common as a mockingbird. Think about your own world. What is something simple that gives you comfort when you feel down? \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, or in your journal, write a poem about this simple thing that brings you joy.

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, Stargirl writes a poem about her trip to the clock on the *Morning Lenape* building. Carefully reread the poem. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What is the theme of the poem? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Alliteration is a device that consists of repeating the same consonant sound at the beginning of two or more words that are close to one another. Find an example of alliteration in her poem and record it here.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why does Stargirl most likely include questions in her poem? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Find a metaphor in the poem and record it here. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Find a strong verb. Record the line/sentence that includes the strong verb here.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is this a free verse poem? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Explain each of the following lines as they relate to characters in the novel.
  - a. 15 Minutes till Found \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Half Past Grace \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. As if a swarm of stinging minutes waits for Betty Lou \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. as if love does not tell all the time the Huffelmeyers need to know \_\_\_\_\_

This is only a portion of the test.

...She came back out with her wristwatch and a hammer. We went out back...

I laid the watch on the bottom step. I hit it with the hammer. The crystal cracked, that was all.

"Here," she said, taking the hammer from me. She wound up like Paul Bunyan and down came the hammer and to pieces went the watch. Minutes flew off like fleas.

I did the same to my watch. We got a garden trowel and buried the pieces. We took all the clocks in the house and dumped them in the trash.

1. What two literary devices are used in the passage?
  - a. realistic dialogue and two similes
  - b. realistic dialogue and personification
  - c. an allusion and two similes
  - d. an allusion and personification
2. Which word **best** describes the mood of the passage?
  - a. violent
  - b. relaxed
  - c. restless
  - d. empowered

...were wondering if you would be willing to take Alvina under your wing, so to speak.

3. What type of figurative language is employed in the passage?
  - a. hyperbole
  - b. idiom
  - c. metaphor
  - d. personification

**coup:** \kōp\ - *verb:* to strike *noun:* **1** : a brilliant, sudden, and usually highly successful stroke or act; **2** : a blow, a stroke  
*plural:* **coups** \küz\ Etymology: French

...a tradition from Native Americans...If you killed a member of a tribe and you're at war, that would be a big honor for you...But there was an even greater honor that would live forever...you would not kill that other warrior...you would sneak up on him and just touch him...for the rest of your life you get to tell the story of how brave you were to get that close to your enemy...that is called counting coup.

4. Which definition of the word **coup** matches the meaning of **counting coup**?
  - a. to strike
  - b. a brilliant and usually successful stroke or act
  - c. a blow
  - d. a strike
5. What does O=(BY)1334Cranberry(F) mean?
  - a. Stargirl put a cranberry on a fence in her backyard.
  - b. Stargirl put a cranberry and a sliced orange in the back yard of 1334 First Street.
  - c. Stargirl put a sliced orange by the yard at 1334 Cranberry Street.
  - d. Stargirl put a sliced orange on a fence in the back yard of the house at 1334 Cranberry Street.
6. Which of the following **best** describes Stargirl's attitude toward Perry?
  - a. critical and hateful
  - b. obedient and submissive
  - c. admiring yet doubtful
  - d. disrespectful yet understanding
7. Why does Stargirl call Alvina her new little sister?
  - a. Alvina is her stepsister.
  - b. Alvina's become so close and open with Stargirl, they seem like sisters.
  - c. Alvina's mom has asked Stargirl to spend time with Alvina to help her behavior improve.
  - d. Thomas has a crush on Stargirl so he calls Stargirl Alvina's sister-in-law.

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