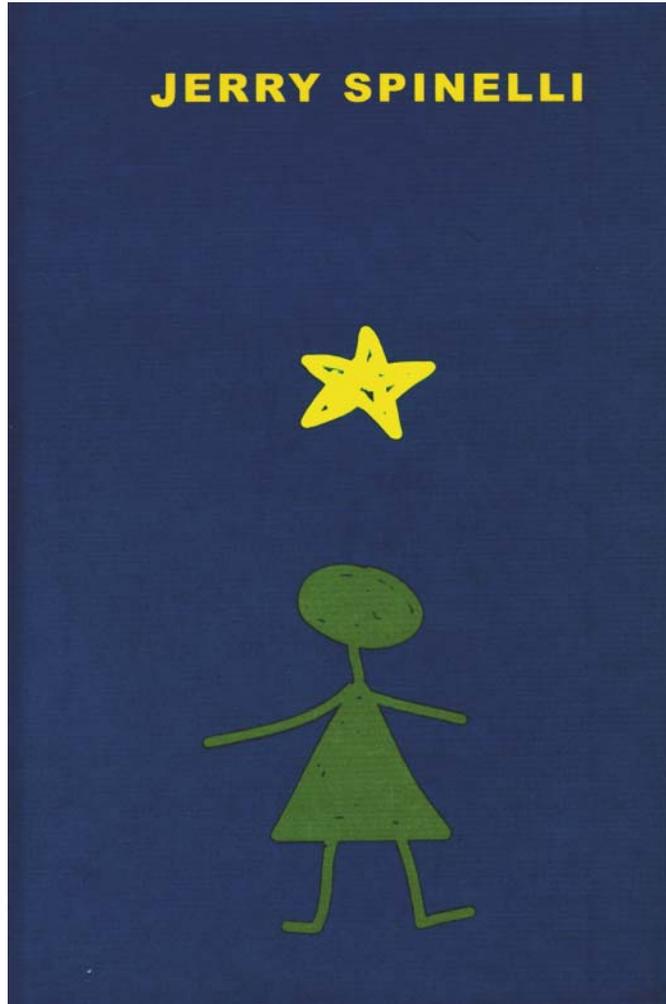


JERRY SPINELLI



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Star Girl

Teacher's Guide

Written by Rosemary Pillsbury

Star Girl

"Porcupine Necktie"

Comprehension

What life-changing event prompts Uncle Pete to give Leo the necktie and what did it look like?

Chapter 1

Comprehension

1. List five attributes associated with Stargirl.

Chapter 2

Vocabulary

Pg. 16	scam	a scheme to cheat or swindle by gaining the confidence of the victims
Pg. 17	marquee	theatre entrance where the show running is advertised
Pg. 17	hoax	trick; deception; fraud
Pg. 19	nonconformity	behavior which shows a choice not to share in the common practices and beliefs
Pg. 20	flapper	dress of the nonconforming women of the 1920's
Pg. 20	kimono	Japanese-style dress consisting of a loose gown with wide sleeves and sash belt

Comprehension

1. What rumor about Stargirl does Hillari Kimble start?

Star Girl

2. How does the “moonlit hour” change Leo’s understanding of Stargirl?

Chapter 3

Vocabulary

Pg. 24	balking	hesitating; refusing to act
Pg. 26	elusive	hard to grasp, baffling
Pg. 27	aviary	cage for keeping birds
Pg. 27	Tudorized	in an architectural style having rounded arches and moldings and paneling

Comprehension

1. How is Stargirl different from a butterfly?

Chapter 4

Comprehension

1. What are Hillari Kimble’s three claims to fame?

Chapter 5

Vocabulary

Pg. 35	converging	coming together; meeting at a point
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Star Girl

Comprehension

1. By Halloween, how do most Mica students feel about Stargirl?

Chapter 6

Vocabulary

Pg. 40 blithely cheerfully

Comprehension

1. When Stargirl sings “Happy Birthday” to Hillari Kimble but directs it through Kevin and Leo, how does she surprise Leo?

Chapter 7

Vocabulary

Pg. 43	creodont	extinct members of a suborder of flesh-eating mammals having small brains
Pg. 43	paleontologist	one who studies prehistoric life through plant and animal fossils
Pg. 44	proximity	nearness
Pg. 45	convened	assembled; gathered
Pg. 45	bafflement	confusion; frustration
Pg. 46	confirmation	reaffirmation; support of beliefs
Pg. 47	Alpha Centauri	the star nearest to planet Earth after the sun
Pg. 47	Paleocene	the epoch (of the Tertiary Period in the Cenozoic Era) which comes before the Eocene
Pg. 49	Rara avis	a “strange bird”; a unique or exceptional person

Star Girl

Comprehension

1. What is Archie's relationship to Stargirl and why does he whisper "Rara avis"?

Chapter 8

Vocabulary

Pg. 51	ovation	outburst of applause
Pg. 54	charade	an act; a pretense
Pg. 55	acclamation	approval

Comprehension

1. What does the quote "We honored her by imitation" mean?

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

Pg. 56	empathies	sharing in the feelings and emotions of others, as if having been through the same experiences
Pg. 57	unshackled	set free
Pg. 57	liberation	freedom
Pg. 58	amorphous	lacking form
Pg. 58	collective	individuals acting together as a whole
Pg. 58	alma mater	school from which one has graduated or which one attended
Pg. 58	golden age	period of great achievement or progress

Star Girl

Comprehension

1. Spinelli opens Chapter 9 with an *extended metaphor* to describe the changes Stargirl has initiated. An *extended metaphor* is a lengthy comparison of seemingly unlike things, without the use of the words *like* or *as*. To what are the Mica students compared? To what is Stargirl compared? How are their lives changed?

2. As Chapter 9 closes, Archie *foreshadows* a change of events. *Foreshadowing* is hinting or warning about future events. Quote the statement that *foreshadows* change.

Chapter 10

Vocabulary

Pg. 59 elated

joyful

Pg. 62 banishing

shutting out; excluding

Comprehension

1. What three events show that people are beginning to mistrust Stargirl?

Star Girl

Chapter 11

Vocabulary

Pg. 66	mortified	humiliated; shamed
Pg. 66	suppress	crush; restrain; hold back
Pg. 69	hapless	unlucky
Pg. 71	ego	sense of self

Comprehension

1. What dirty trick do her fellow cheerleaders play on Stargirl to punish her for cheering for the opponents as well as the Electrons?

Chapter 12

Vocabulary

Pg. 74	inquisition	tribunal; court of investigation
Pg. 78	maestro	a conductor of a musical performance
Pg. 78	spiel	a speech given to make a sale or promote a product
Pg. 78	impromptu	without rehearsal; spontaneous

Comprehension

1. What two things happen in Chapter 12 that reverse the tables, making the jury and crew the victims of the *Hot Seat* rather than Stargirl?

Star Girl

Chapter 13

Comprehension

1. When the jury turns into a mob and attacks Stargirl in the interview, they hint that she has betrayed three different groups or institutions. Which three and how?

Chapter 14

Vocabulary

Pg. 91	cascade	to fall in a connected series
Pg. 91	hostility	ill will; unfriendliness
Pg. 95	volleys	discharges of shots; series of shots
Pg. 95	delusion	false belief
Pg. 96	defiance	challenge; resistance

Comprehension

1. How is Stargirl's cheering different from that of the other cheerleaders?

Chapter 15

Vocabulary

Pg. 99	subdued	controlled; diminished; held back
Pg. 100	Eocene	the second epoch of the Tertiary Period in the Cenozoic Era and the time when mammals became the dominant animals
Pg. 101	annihilated	crushed; destroyed

Star Girl

Comprehension

1. What is haunting Leo and how does he deal with his confusion?

Chapter 16

Vocabulary

Pg. 105 adobe sun-dried brick or clay

Comprehension

1. Leo thinks about Stargirl, “She was the opposite of cool; she held nothing back.”
What does he mean?

Chapter 17

Vocabulary

Pg. 114	enchanted	charmed; under a magic spell; delightful
Pg. 115	stalking	following in a stealthy or hidden manner
Pg. 115	smitten	hard hit; strongly influenced
Pg. 116	tendrils	plant shoots, often supporting the spreading plant
Pg. 118	promenade	the hall of a great building; a parade route
Pg. 123	serenity	a calm, tranquil, peaceful state
Pg. 124	cosmos	the harmonious order of the universe

Star Girl

Comprehension

1. Using a *metaphor* (a comparison of seemingly unlike things, without the use of *like* or *as*), Leo describes his experience of first love as follows: “In school I was a yellow balloon, smiling and lazy, floating above the classrooms.” Leo doesn’t fall out of love, but something deflates his balloon. What is it?

2. On page 121, Stargirl uses a *simile* to describe her experience after she erases her thoughts. A *simile*, like a metaphor, compares two seemingly unlike things. But a simile uses the words *like* or *as*. Quote the sentence with the simile.

Chapter 18

Vocabulary

Pg. 127 raucous

loud; raucous

Pg. 131 paranoid

showing feelings of persecution

Comprehension

1. Use these words in a short paragraph to describe the new feelings Leo is experiencing: *avoided*, *paranoid*, *isolation*.

Star Girl

Chapter 19

Vocabulary

Pg. 132	shunning	total avoidance and exclusion; shutting out; rejecting
Pg. 132	excommunicated	excluded; cut off; denied participation in the sacraments of the church
Pg. 132	repents	expresses regret about something done
Pg. 136	predator	an animal that lives by feeding on other animals
Pg. 136	seducer	someone who tempts another into evil behavior
Pg. 137	derelict	abandoned; deserted; homeless
Pg. 137	dignitary	a person of esteem; a person holding a high office

Comprehension

1. When Leo tells Archie how he and Stargirl are being shunned, Archie responds by whispering, “Poor dolphin. Caught in a tuna net.” Explain this metaphor.

Chapter 20

Vocabulary

Pg. 139	masochistic	taking pleasure in being subjected to pain
Pg. 141	revel	take delight; celebrate; make merry

Comprehension

1. What does Stargirl want to do when she grows up?

2. When and how did Stargirl first become aware of Leo Borlock?

Star Girl

Chapter 21

Vocabulary

Pg. 149 facetiously sarcastically; jokingly

Comprehension

1. What are three sources which inspire Stargirl's seemingly random acts of kindness?

Chapter 22

Vocabulary

Pg. 161 obsessed troubled; preoccupied

Comprehension

1. What is the tally in Stargirl's happy wagon?

Chapter 23

Comprehension

1. Why is Leo beginning to resent Stargirl?

Chapter 24

Vocabulary

Pg. 172 badgered picked upon; bothered

Star Girl

Comprehension

1. In Chapter 24, what is Leo's response to Stargirl's banner professing her love?

Chapter 25

Vocabulary

Pg. 174 palmetto

a type of fan-shaped palm tree

Comprehension

1. In Chapter 25, whom does Leo blame for Stargirl's shunning?

Chapter 26

Comprehension

1. How does Stargirl demonstrate that she is desperate to have the shunning end?

Chapter 27

Comprehension

1. Why is Dori Dilson, who has been Stargirl's one enduring friend, angry at Stargirl?

Star Girl

Chapter 28

Vocabulary

Pg. 202	manikins	models of humans, posed and dressed for fashion display
Pg. 203	sprightly	energetic; lively
Pg. 203	pirouette	a whirling turn on the point of the toe
Pg. 203	titters	half-laughs; nervous laughs; embarrassed laughter
Pg. 203	subsided	waned; leveled off; became less intense; diminished

Comprehension

1. What is the source of Stargirl's speeches in the State oratorical competition?

Chapter 29

Comprehension

1. When Susan wins the contest and is featured on the front page, Leo feels "pride welling" in himself. What emotions replace the pride as they drive into the Mica parking lot?

Chapter 30

Vocabulary

Pg. 210	vacantly	in a manner showing emptiness of mind or no thought
Pg. 212	infinite	unending; beyond understanding; limitless
Pg. 215	disparaged	belittled; disrespected; looked down upon
Pg. 215	flamenco	a Spanish-style dance, with foot-stamping and hand-clapping
Pg. 215	castanets	hand and finger instruments used to mark the beat of

Star Girl

Spanish songs by clicks

Comprehension

1. How does Leo show his cowardice as Chapter 30 concludes?

Chapter 31

Vocabulary

Pg. 217 festooned

hung with garlands of decorations

Pg. 217 Cantonese

from the area of Canton, China

Comprehension

1. Re-read page 221. What new sensation emerges among the students attending the Ocotillo Ball as they watch Stargirl in her yellow gown?

Chapter 32

Comprehension

1. Before leaving for college, what does Leo discover about Archie's toolshed?

Chapter 33

Comprehension

1. What is Leo's profession?

Star Girl

More than Stars

Comprehension

1. What legacy has Stargirl left on Mica?

HIDDEN MESSAGE

Archie might have asked Leo this question:

Contest Stargirl won	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
			48					40		
Stargirl sings “Happy Birthday” to this Alan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2				28					
Leo produced this show	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	47		41					54		
Señor Saguario was one	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
					10					
School messages were posted on this	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		43		42					52	
Stargirl led this dance	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
				44		31		11		
Stargirl’s transportation to the Ocotillo Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	22			3		18				50
Name of musical duet, including Stargirl and Dori Dilson	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	5		23			4	45			

Star Girl

Stargirl's pet rat

33 1 35

Archie Brubaker's profession

25 17 51 6

When the novel ends, Leo has collected three of these

21 34 46 30 32

This bird may sing the songs of extinct as well as living species

13 15 37

Stargirl was making one for Peter Sinkowitz

16 26 24

Stargirl's favorite part of the newspaper

19 7 9

Time limit of Stargirl's "what kind of card" game

53 20 14 27

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	v	9	10	11	y	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	f	
30	31	32	33	34	35	w	37	w	h	40	41	42	43	
44	45	46	47	48	v	50	51	52	53	54	?			

Teacher's Page

“Porcupine Necktie” Comprehension

What life-changing event prompts Uncle Pete to give Leo the necktie and what did it look like?

Uncle Pete gives Leo the necktie when, at age twelve, Leo moves with his family from Pennsylvania to Arizona. The tie depicts three porcupines, two tossing quill darts and one picking its teeth.

Chapter 1

1. List five attributes associated with Stargirl.

Answers will vary but may include: freckles over her nose, sandy hair, huge eyes, tenth-grader, home-schooled, ukulele player, singer.

Chapter 2

1. What rumor about Stargirl does Hillari Kimble start?

Hillari starts a rumor that Stargirl is part of a scam to increase school spirit at Mica.

2. How does the “moonlit hour” change Leo’s understanding of Stargirl?

In the “moonlit hour” Leo considers the “otherness of things” and concludes that Stargirl is real.

Chapter 3

1. How is Stargirl different from a butterfly?

Unlike a butterfly, Stargirl can't be pinned down or identified.

Chapter 4

1. What are Hillari Kimble’s three claims to fame?

Hillari is known for her mouth, The Hoax, and Wayne Parr.

Chapter 5

1. By Halloween, how do most Mica students feel about Stargirl?

By Halloween, most Mica students enjoy the novelty Stargirl provides, but they still keep her at arm's length because she's different.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 6

1. When Stargirl sings “Happy Birthday” to Hillari Kimble but directs it through Kevin and Leo, how does she surprise Leo?

After singing, she admits that she thinks Leo is cute.

Chapter 7

1. What is Archie’s relationship to Stargirl and why does he whisper “Rara avis”?
Archie has been Stargirl’s teacher for one day a week. He whispers “Rara avis” because he thinks Stargirl is unique and fascinating.

Chapter 8

1. What does the quote “We honored her by imitation” mean?
Mica students show their newfound affection by imitating the things that Stargirl does, like dancing in the rain, keeping a pet rat, and playing the ukulele.

Chapter 9

1. Spinelli opens Chapter 9 with an *extended metaphor* to describe the changes Stargirl has initiated. An *extended metaphor* is a lengthy comparison of seemingly unlike things, without the use of the words *like* or *as*. To what are the Mica students compared? To what is Stargirl compared? How are their lives changed?

Mica students are compared to dormant frogs buried in the mud and Stargirl is compared to the rain which frees them from their prison-like condition. In the transition, Stargirl gives them sight and hearing and the ability to feel, for themselves and for each other.

2. As Chapter 9 closes, Archie *foreshadows* a change of events. *Foreshadowing* is hinting or warning about future events. Quote the statement that *foreshadows* change.

Archie says, “The trouble with miracles is, they don’t last long.”

Teacher's Page

Chapter 10

1. What three events show that people are beginning to mistrust Stargirl?
Stargirl's version of the Pledge of Allegiance is posted on the bulletin board; Stargirl is banished from Anna Grisdale's grandfather's wake; Danny Pike's bike — probably a gift from Stargirl — is rejected by Mrs. Pike.

Chapter 11

1. What dirty trick do her fellow cheerleaders play on Stargirl to punish her for cheering for the opponents as well as the Electrons?
Her fellow cheerleaders conspire to have Stargirl left behind by the bus after the game — two hours away from Mica.

Chapter 12

1. What two things happen in Chapter 12 that reverse the tables, making the jury and crew the victims of the *Hot Seat* rather than Stargirl?
Stargirl is able to reverse the tables by her pantomime of getting burned on the "Hot Seat." And Cinnamon frightens the jury when he gets loose and invades their space.

Chapter 13

1. When the jury turns into a mob and attacks Stargirl in the interview, they hint that she has betrayed three different groups or institutions. Which three and how?
The jury hints that she has betrayed her parents by rejecting the birth name they gave her. They hint that she has betrayed her country by inventing her own version of the Pledge of Allegiance. And they say she has betrayed her school by cheering for the other teams as well.

Chapter 14

1. How is Stargirl's cheering different from that of the other cheerleaders?
Stargirl continues to cheer with her whole self, even when the Electrons are clearly defeated.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 15

1. What is haunting Leo and how does he deal with his confusion?

Stargirl has given Leo a Valentine and he is so confused about his emotions and preoccupied with her that he throws darts and hears her voice as he tries to sleep.

Chapter 16

1. Leo thinks about Stargirl, "She was the opposite of cool; she held nothing back." What does he mean?

Stargirl is not concerned with how others will see her or if they will think she is cool. She does what she really wants to do rather than concerning herself with others' reactions to her.

Chapter 17

1. Using a *metaphor* (a comparison of seemingly unlike things, without the use of *like* or *as*), Leo describes his experience of first love as follows: "In school I was a yellow balloon, smiling and lazy, floating above the classrooms." Leo doesn't fall out of love, but something deflates his balloon. What is it?

Leo becomes aware that being Stargirl's boyfriend will put him in the spotlight and he is rather shy, preferring to be less conspicuous.

2. On page 121, Stargirl uses a *simile* to describe her experience after she erases her thoughts. A simile, like a metaphor, compares two seemingly unlike things. But a simile uses the words *like* or *as*. Quote the sentence with the simile.

"And then the world is free to flow into me like water into an empty bowl."

Chapter 18

1. Use these words in a short paragraph to describe the new feelings Leo is experiencing: *avoided, paranoid, isolation*.

Answers will vary.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 19

1. When Leo tells Archie how he and Stargirl are being shunned, Archie responds by whispering, "Poor dolphin. Caught in a tuna net." Explain this metaphor.
Leo is the dolphin; Stargirl is the tuna; the net is the shunning. The net is cast to punish Stargirl for her nonconformity. Leo is like a dolphin because he is caught, as a dolphin is in a tuna net, just because he is sharing the same water, or inhabiting the same space.

Chapter 20

1. What does Stargirl want to do when she grows up?
Stargirl wants to drive a silver lunch truck.
2. When and how did Stargirl first become aware of Leo Borlock?
Stargirl became aware of Leo right after he moved to Arizona, when his mother submitted information about him to run in the regular feature about kids' birthdays.

Chapter 21

1. What are three sources which inspire Stargirl's seemingly random acts of kindness?
Stargirl is inspired by information she reads in the local newspaper, gossip she hears at the hairdresser's, and news on community bulletin boards.

Chapter 22

1. What is the tally in Stargirl's happy wagon?
There are seventeen happy and three unhappy stones.

Chapter 23

1. Why is Leo beginning to resent Stargirl?
Leo is beginning to resent Stargirl because his association with her is causing him to be shunned.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 24

1. In Chapter 24, what is Leo's response to Stargirl's banner professing her love?
Leo is embarrassed and responds to her by sweeping Cinnamon off his shoulder and walking off, rejecting Stargirl.

Chapter 25

1. In Chapter 25, whom does Leo blame for Stargirl's shunning?
Leo clearly puts the blame on Stargirl for her behavior at the basketball game, comforting the "enemy."

Chapter 26

1. How does Stargirl demonstrate that she is desperate to have the shunning end?
Stargirl shows how desperate she is by wearing a backscratcher and a sign offering a back scratch in return for breaking the shunning and speaking to her.

Chapter 27

1. Why is Dori Dilson, who has been Stargirl's one enduring friend, angry at Stargirl?
Dori is angry at Stargirl because she believes Stargirl is betraying herself by making herself over into Susan.

Chapter 28

1. What is the source of Stargirl's speeches in the State oratorical competition?
Stargirl says the speeches are "just there" and that she just has to let them speak themselves.

Chapter 29

1. When Susan wins the contest and is featured on the front page, Leo feels "pride welling" in himself. What emotions replace the pride as they drive into the Mica parking lot?
Leo seems to feel afraid and protective of Stargirl, wishing to avoid the parking lot. Finally, he seems sad for her loss and for his.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 30

1. How does Leo show his cowardice as Chapter 30 concludes?

Leo knows he should have the courage to applaud the unique talents of Dori and Stargirl, but he is too insecure to do so and hides instead.

Chapter 31

1. Re-read page 221. What new sensation emerges among the students attending the Ocotillo Ball as they watch Stargirl in her yellow gown?

The Mica students realize how complete Stargirl is and how alone they are.

Chapter 32

1. Before leaving for college, what does Leo discover about Archie's toolshed?

Leo discovers that Archie's toolshed was Stargirl's office, where she kept records and supplies for her acts of kindness.

Chapter 33

1. What is Leo's profession?

Leo is a set designer.

"More than Stars" Comprehension

1. What legacy has Stargirl left on Mica?

Mica has a sunflower club, whose members do kind acts daily; the marching band includes a ukulele; the Electrons cheer for the opposing crowd's first basket of the game.

Teacher's Page

Hidden Message Answer

I f y o u g i v e u p
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11
y o u r s e l f t o b e p a r t
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
o f t h e c r o w d w h a t d o
28 30 31 32 33 34 35 37 40 41 42 43
y o u h a v e l e f t ?
44 45 46 47 48 50 51 52 53 54

Writing Prompts and Artistic Interpretations

These prompts are provided as choices. Customize them to your students' needs and your curriculum goals.

1. In Chapter 1, Leo says, "Our interest in each other was never keener than during the fifteen minutes before the first bell of the first day." Consider the motivations for all the energy put into the first day of school. Focus on a particular first day of school you remember. Let yourself be the narrator, as Leo was in Chapter 1. Describe those fifteen minutes from your point of view.
2. Compare and contrast your school with Mica Area High School, based on this observation by Leo from pages 19 and 20: *Mica Area High School — MAHS — was not exactly a hotbed of nonconformity. There were individual variants here and there, of course, but within pretty narrow limits we all wore the same clothes, talked the same way, ate the same food, listened to the same music. Even our dorks and nerds had a MAHS stamp on them. If we happened to somehow distinguish ourselves, we quickly snapped back into place, like rubber bands.*

Teacher's Page

3. In Chapter 10, on page 60, Stargirl's version of the Pledge of Allegiance is posted on the roadrunner. Research the history of the Pledge of Allegiance and the controversy which has sometimes been associated with it. Read again Stargirl's version from the novel. Then choose and defend in a persuasive essay one of the following positions:
 - a) Stargirl should have been allowed to recite her version of the Pledge of Allegiance without challenge.
 - b) Stargirl should have been prevented from reciting her version of the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Hillari Kimble sees Stargirl as *the enemy* from their first day together at Mica. She even slaps her across the face at the Ocotillo Ball. Use Hillari's voice to write Stargirl a letter before a homecoming fifteen years after that ball. Assume the following: Hillari knows that she and Stargirl will both be attending and Hillari, as president of the Alumni, has been asked to present Stargirl with the Distinguished Alumna Award.
5. In Chapter 17, Stargirl takes Leo for a walk into an "enchanted" place in the Sonoran desert. Describe the most enchanted place you have ever visited.
6. Write a persuasive essay, sharing events from the novel as evidence, to support or refute this statement: *The problem between Leo and Stargirl was that Leo didn't really love Stargirl.*
7. Write a response to the solution of the Hidden Message.
8. Relate these two important quotes from the novel:
 - a) (from page 200) . . . *somehow she threaded every different thing through the voice of a solitary mockingbird singing in the desert. She called her speech "I Might Have Heard a Moa."*

Teacher's Page

- b) (from pages 135–136) “. . . *She seems to be in touch with something that the rest of us are missing . . . We have just slept the sleep of our most distant ancestors, and something of them and their world still clings to us.*”
9. Use inkpad thumbprints to create a cartoon series of the events of Chapter 12, in which Stargirl appeared on the *Hot Seat*.
10. Design an alternate book jacket based on the extended metaphor that opens Chapter 9.

Integrated Curriculum:

The novel's theme of individualism versus peer pressure can easily be adapted to health curriculum, especially as a link to many destructive forms of conformity (i.e., violence and substance use/abuse) and peer pressure.

The novel can be tied to science curriculum themes of ecosystems, focusing on desert ecology. It can also be related to geologic themes of eras and epochs and the emergence of mammals.

Vocabulary Building:

Use the following template to involve students in recognizing the new vocabulary words by the parts of speech to which they correspond. You may use this as an individual, pair, small group, or whole group activity. Invite students to share invented sentences for each new word. Oral work ensures correct pronunciation and facilitates learning of new vocabulary.

Teacher's Page

Vocabulary Booster

VERBS	ADVERBS	NOUNS	ADJECTIVES

Verbs are words that express action, existence, or occurrence. They are the action words.

Adverbs generally describe the way something is done. They modify verbs, but also modify adjectives and other adverbs. They often describe when, where, and in what manner something is done. They often end in *ly*.

Nouns are naming words for persons, places, things, actions, and qualities.

Adjectives are words that describe or qualify nouns.

Directions: Use the template above to sort the vocabulary words by parts of speech as you read. When you have completed the words for the assigned chapters, use each word in a sentence.