**The Report Card**

**Teacher Guide**

**Pre-Reading Activities:**

~Watch the video – Andrew Clements talking about writing The Report Card

<http://on.aol.com/video/andrew-clements-talks-about-writing-the-report-card-500188532>

~ Online Teacher Guide (No Copyright) with discussion questions

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/simonschuster/ReportCard_TG.pdf>

**~ Discussion Starters –**

~ What if you had a special talent that made you really different than your peers? Would you let people know or would you hide it? What might make you hide your talent from people?

~ Nora says that she got her terrible report card for Stephen. Explain this statement. List some of the ways Nora describes her friend Stephen. How do you think Nora really feels about Stephen? Do you think protecting Stephen is truly the only reason Nora decided to get a bad report card?

~ Nora pigeonholes her sister and brother into specific roles in the family. Ann is the successful student, and Todd is the average-yet-likeable guy. What role does Nora think she is? How does this affect her actions? Do you feel you play a particular role in your family? How does this affect your behavior?

~ Nora feels that the only place she can let everyone see her talent is on the soccer field. Why does she feel this way? How are being a good athlete and being a good student perceived differently at your school? How do you feel about this situation?

~ Describe what happens at your school and at home on a report card day. What is special about a report card day? Who opens your report card? How do you feel just before the report card is opened? What happens if you get especially good or bad grades?

~ Early in the book, Nora says that, "fifth grade grades matter." What does she mean? How do your grades contribute to your opinion of yourself (how does a bad grade make you feel, and how does a good grade make you fee)? How do your grades contribute to your parents', friends', and teachers' opinions of you? Do you think your grades paint a fair picture of you?

~ Nora's bad grades get a lot of people in trouble beside herself. This is surprising to Nora. List the people who also get "bad grades" as a result of Nora's poor school performance and describe the other surprising results of her failure.

Imagine that you did the same thing Nora did, who else would your decision effect?

~ When the school administrators confront Stephen and Nora about their "Get a Zero" plan, Mrs. Hackney says: "A disobedient attitude has been set loose in our school. And we have got to stop it." Why is Mrs. Hackney so concerned about this problem? What do you think might have happened had Nora and Stephen not been caught so early on in their "zero rebellion"?

~ Would you like to go to a school without tests or grades? Why or why not? List some of the possible positive and negative aspects of such a school.

~ If we didn’t have grades, what do you think we could use to decide if you’ve learned something? What would our report cards look like?

~ List the following personality qualities in order of importance to you: intelligence, compassion, patience, honesty, creativity, diligence. Explain your list.

~ What does it mean to feel, or to be, normal? Describe a "normal kid" or a "normal" day? Do you think being "normal" is a good goal for Nora? Is it a good goal for kids in general? Is there really such a thing as "normal"?

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Report Card question sheet

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. In the story Nora tells us about events when she was young that shows she is “different” from other kids. Which of these did not happen in the passage?
2. She completed a 500 piece puzzle that her older sister Ann was playing with
3. She pretended to be a dog the first 2 weeks of kindergarten so she wouldn’t have to do the work because she knew it would be too easy.
4. After Nora learned how to walk she learned how to read
5. Nora discovered that she can remember everything very easily
6. Nora states that, “I will become the living average of all the other children in my kindergarten.” What did she mean by this?
7. She wants to be different from all the other children
8. She will act like herself
9. She will copy the other students in her class and be like them
10. She will watch the other kids and do the opposite of what they do
11. Tell me some characteristics of Stephen? What makes him special to Nora?

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1. What is the sequence in the Reading of the Grades ritual?
2. Anne, Todd, then Nora
3. Todd, Nora, then Anne
4. Only Mom and Dad read the report cards
5. Anne, Nora, then Todd
6. What caused the meeting between Nora, her parents, her teachers, and the principal?
7. Nora didn’t understand the grades on her report card
8. Her parents wanted to get to know her teachers better
9. Her parents were concerned about Nora’s grades
10. Nora did not like her teachers and her principal

6. Nora is caught by Mrs. Byrne, the school librarian, who figures out that Nora is hiding something. What caused Mrs. Byrne to figure out Nora is much smarter then she is showing everyone?

A. Nora breaks down and tells her the truth

B. Nora is tested and the results come back that she is a genius

C. Mrs. Byrne overhears a conversation between Nora and Stephen

D. Nora forgot to log out of the computer that she was using

7. In chapter 10 we find out the whole reason Nora is doing this “experiment”. Summarize her reasons for earning all D’s on her report card – what is she trying to show everyone?

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8. Using the context on pages 80 & 81 which of these is a good definition for the word *cynical*?

A. always happy and positive about what is happening

B. someone who often has negative thoughts about people, things or events

C. someone who hates everyone

D. someone who never leaves their house

9. Compare Nora’s grades to the score she makes on the test Dr. Trindler gives her. Why does Nora start to get nervous once Mrs. Byrne tells her the results?

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10. What did Nora do to try to seem “normal” on the IQ test?

 A. she purposely missed every other question

 B. She refused to take the test

 C. She missed 3 out of every 10 questions

 D. she just took the whole test and didn’t try to miss any questions

11. What was Nora’s response when her language arts teacher asked the class to skim a story?

A. Nora summarized the whole story

B. Nora would not complete the assignment

C. Nora read part but didn’t like it so she stopped reading

D. Nora asked another student to complete the assignment for her

12. What happened because of the boys teasing Stephen at the lunch table?

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13. What grade did Mr. McAdams from Chelborn Academy think Nora could join if she went to his school?

 A. 6th

 B.10th

 C. 7th

 D. 8th

14. What plan did Nora and Stephen come up with to show parents and school officials that grade are not the only thing that matters?

 A. students would walk out of their classroom when it was test time

 B. students would all make zero’s on their tests

 C. students would try as hard as they could to make perfect grades

 D. students would just make the same grades they usually do

15. Tell me the effect they wanted their plan to have?

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Did it work the way they expected?

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16. What was the punishment given to Nora and Stephen because of their plan?

 A. 2 weeks suspension

 B. 2 months suspension

 C. 2 days suspension

 D 2 years suspension

17. Nora did all of these actions for a reason. What does Nora want to be more than anything else in the world?

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18. Fill in the venn diagram comparing and contrasting Nora and Stephen

