

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## 101 Ways to Bug Your Parents

by  
Lee Wardlaw

### Book Information

Lee Wardlaw, 101 Ways to Bug Your Parents  
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Book Level: 3.9  
Interest Level: MG

When his parents call off the family vacation and enroll their son in a creative writing class instead, twelve-year-old Steve comes up with a wacky money-making project.

**Award:** State Award

**Topics:** Arts, Misc./Other; Family Life, Parenting; Family Life, Sons; Humor/Funny, Funny; Power Lessons AR, Grade 4; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 1-3

### Main Characters

Ace (John Smith) the classmate who saves Sneezee from angry students and whose real name remains a mystery to everyone but Sneezee

Dad (Dr. Wyatt) Sneezee's father, who is a part-time professor at three community colleges

Goldie (Trudy) Laux a classmate of Sneezee who is known to be a gossip

Hayley Barker Sneezee's summer school classmate and the daughter of the owner of Gadabout Golf

Hiccup (Hector) Denardo Sneezee's best friend

Mom (Dr. Wyatt) Sneezee's mother, who is a microbiologist

Mr. Barker the owner of Gadabout Golf, who hires Sneezee and Hiccup to help with maintenance

Mrs. Laux Goldie's mother, who is a vice-principal at the beginning of the story, but is later promoted to principal

Pierre (Peter) Noel a classmate of Sneezee who wants to become a French chef

Regan the owner of the Tool Box hardware store, who is also an inventor

Scribbler (Mr. Powell) the sixth-grade, summer-school teacher who defends Sneezee's choice of book topics

Sneezee (Steve) Wyatt a sixth-grade student who loves inventing and dreams of going to the Invention Convention

### Vocabulary

**allergy** a reaction of the immune system to a substance that is usually harmless

**manuscript** a document that has not been published

**mechanism** a group of parts that performs a specific function

**Medusa** a Greek mythological figure who had snakes growing out of her head

**microbiologist** a person who studies tiny organisms

**stethoscope** a medical instrument used to listen to bodily sounds

**toupee** a man's wig for covering a bald spot

**veto** to prohibit or disapprove

### Synopsis

Steve "Sneezee" Wyatt loves inventing things, but his latest invention, the Nice Alarm, fails in front of his sixth-grade class on the last day of school before summer vacation. He hopes to get the alarm working well before the Invention Convention he plans to attend. Going to this convention has been his dream, and he even has an appointment with the president of a company who is interested in his Nice Alarm. Sneezee must quickly earn some money so he can fix it before the convention. He works out a deal with the owner of the hardware store, Regan, and gets the parts he needs to fix his invention. But he must earn \$6.89 by Monday to pay for the parts. Sneezee and his best friend, Hiccup, make a plan to earn the money collecting golf balls at a nearby miniature golf course.

At home that night, Sneezee gets some bad news from his parents. They have cancelled the trip to the Invention Convention because of a lack of time and money. Instead of going to the Invention

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Convention, they have enrolled Sneeze in a summer school writing class. Sneeze is very upset and begins a list of ways to bug his mother and father in order to get them to change their minds about the convention and summer school. The next morning at the miniature golf course Sneeze and Hiccup get jobs for the whole summer doing maintenance on the golf course. Sneeze pays Regan the money he owes and asks Regan to take him to the Invention Convention with him. Regan finally agrees but asks for five hundred dollars to cover the extra cost. Sneeze quickly realizes that the job at the golf course will help but it will not be enough. To earn enough money, Sneeze decides to write a book, *101 Ways to Bug Your Parents*, and sell it to other kids who want to pester their parents. Sneeze takes many orders for his book, becomes more popular with other kids, and abandons Hiccup to spend time with his new friends. The book is finally finished but is a great disappointment to his customers, and Sneeze loses all his new "friends." After he realizes his mistake in ignoring Hiccup, he renews his friendship with him, and they revise the book together. Meanwhile, the school principal and Sneeze's parents find out about the book and are very upset about its content. Sneeze's teacher, Mr. Powell, defends Sneeze at a school board meeting. Sneeze is allowed to finish the book but is forbidden to sell it on school property.

Through this trouble at school, Sneeze and his parents finally begin to communicate and decide to go to the Invention Convention the following year. This will give Sneeze more time to perfect his inventions and the family more time to save money for the trip.

The epilogue reveals that the whole family travels to the convention the next summer. Though his invention is not successful, his book is. A company publishes it, and Sneeze plans to spend the money to produce the Nice Alarm himself and to continue creating inventions.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Initial Understanding

What is the most likely reason Hayley is so suspicious of Hiccup and Sneeze at the beginning of the book? Is she justified in feeling this way?

*Hayley is probably suspicious because she expects them to be like other customers their age who have not been trustworthy. Some students may say that Hayley is justified because in working at the golf course she has had negative experiences with youth who cause problems. Other students may say that Hayley is not justified because people should be judged on their own actions, not on the actions of others.*

#### Literary Analysis

Being able to determine the central conflict of a story is important because it allows the reader to be able to identify important literary elements such as the protagonist, antagonist, climax, theme, and main idea. What is the central conflict of this book? Why?

*The central conflict focuses on the lack of communication between Sneeze and his parents. Sneeze does not tell his parents why he wants to go to the Invention Convention because he does not think they will listen. This causes Sneeze to find a job and write the book to raise the money to pay for his own way to the convention. Sneeze probably would not have written a book that caused so much trouble if his parents had really understood how much the convention meant to him.*

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### Inferential Comprehension

What are some possible ways Sneeze and his parents could continue to improve their communication skills and their relationship?

*There are a number of things they could do to grow closer together. They could commit to a weekly family outing. They could spend time together in the evenings, perhaps playing board games. They could participate in each other's hobbies and interests. They could plan a summer vacation in which they balance activities and quiet time together.*

### Constructing Meaning

Hiccup is understandably upset when Sneeze's new-found popularity causes him to ignore Hiccup in favor of more popular students. Explain a time when you acted like Sneeze. Also explain a time when you were treated like Hiccup. How did you feel each time? What did you learn from these experiences?

*Students' responses will vary but should explain their reactions to these situations and identify what understanding they have gained from them. Students may conclude that loyalty is best and that strong friendships are not based on superficial values.*

## Teachable Skills

**Recognizing Setting** Hayley's parents had worked together to design a fun and interesting miniature golf course. Have students create a diorama in which they create their own miniature golf course. Students could use a cardboard box for the base and place green construction paper and small household objects inside to create the course. Emphasize the importance of originality.

**Understanding Characterization** Ace gives his fellow students nicknames that describe them. Have students choose nicknames for themselves and write a paragraph explaining why their nickname is appropriate. Emphasize that students should focus on positive characteristics. They might choose their nicknames from characteristics such as personality traits, talents, accomplishments, etc.

**Identifying Reading Strategies** Hiccup shares Mrs. Watt's interest in science and medical terminology. Have each student choose a medical term used in the book, research it, and give an oral summary to the rest of the class. Students could use index cards to summarize their ideas. Have them practice their delivery with a classmate several times before they present their summaries to the entire class.

**Responding to Literature** Sneeze loves inventing. Have the students create an idea for their own invention. Have them draw a diagram of their invention and write a one-page description of what it does and how it works.