



Minion

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Michael Morn might be a villain, but that doesn't mean he's a bad guy. When you live in New Liberty, the City Without a Hero, you sometimes have to turn to crime to get by. Michael and his Dad do what they have to in order to survive. But then a Super named The Comet comes to town and Michael's world is thrown into disarray. The Comet could destroy everything Michael and his dad have built. Soon Michael must decide whose side he is on, and how far he is willing to go save the people he cares for most.

This coming-of-age story is a companion novel to *SIDEKICKED*, but is a stand-alone story. The reading level and vocabulary are ideal for grades 5 through 8. Be aware, there are moments of comic-book style violence. The novel also addresses complex issues of morality, family structure, trust, and spirituality.



About the Author

John David Anderson lives in Indianapolis, Indiana with his wife and twins. He is an avid reader, hiker, chocolate-eater and game-player. He believes that books should be entertaining enough to distract you while they subtly needle you with life lessons and philosophical conundrums. He is the author of *Minion*, *Sidekicked*, and *Standard Hero Behavior*.

What You Can Talk About

1. Questions of moral relativity. Is breaking the law *always* wrong? Are there times when you can justify breaking society's law in order to follow your own moral compass? Can you do the right thing for the wrong reason? What about the other way?
2. The definition of heroism in our culture: What makes someone heroic? Their actions? Their beliefs? How does one attain the label? Is it always deserved?
3. Definitions of parenthood, especially fatherhood. What role do fathers play in their children's lives? Is it a birthright or an earned privilege? What makes for a good father figure?
4. How our beliefs are shaped by the people around us. At what point do we begin to question/evaluate them for ourselves? On what grounds do we make those judgments?
5. When is it okay to lie? If you're a parent, should you lie to your children? What about the other way around? Is withholding the truth the same as lying?

Discussion Questions and Writing Prompts

1. Read the last line of the novel again. Which side do you think Michael is on? What makes you think so? Do you think Viola really knows? Are there more than two sides?
2. Do you think Benjamin Edson is a good father? Why or why not?
3. The Professor says it's important to believe in something, even if it's wrong. Do you agree? Is it possible to go through life without believing in anything?
4. Michael is able to bend others to his will. Pretend you had his power. Pick one person in your life that you would use it on. What would you convince them of/persuade them to do and why?
5. Michael's most important relationship is with his Dad, but friendships are also important to him. What impact does his relationship with Zach or Viola have on him as he moves throughout the novel?
6. Do you think Benjamin Edson is a "bad guy"? Do you think The Comet is a "good guy"? What if we don't put those terms in quotes?
7. *Minion* is a *bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age novel. As such the character is meant to grow or evolve over the course of the story? Do you think Michael has learned anything? What, exactly?
8. Let's say you *were* going to try and take over the world (a foolish quest). How would you go about it? Be creative in your response.

Fun (and Educational) Learning Activities

1. Develop a plan for taking over the world

Outline the various steps you will take. Make a list of the materials you will need and how you will acquire them. Draw diagrams or sketches to illustrate the process. Estimate how much it will cost.

2. Test human curiosity

Build a black box. Put something inside. It can be a dirty sock, a pack of gum, a nickel, a used tissue, you decide. Make sure it is completely concealed. Tell people that you have no idea what's inside, but whatever it is, it's theirs. They only need to open the lid and grab what's inside.

Keep a poll of how many people chose to open the box. What does this tell you about human curiosity? How many dirty socks did you lose?

3. Imagine yourself as a minion

What would your powers be? What name would you take? What would your weakness be (yes, you have to have one)? What would your costume look like (feel free to sketch it out)? Who would your nemesis be? Where would your headquarters be located? Who do you work for? Why?

What do you think your answers to all the questions above say about you, your personality, your goals, and your limitations?

Take the Minion Matching Challenge

Match up the minion with its mastermind below

Harley Quinn

Gru

Grover Dill

Megamind

Henchmen 21 and 24

Mr. Burns

Darth Vader

Scut Farkus

Iago

Magneto

Minion

Professor Edson

Dave

The Joker

Michael Morn

The Monarch

Waylan Smithers

Emperor Palpatine

Mystique

Jaffar

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call 1-800-C-HARPER, or fax your order to 1-800-822-4090.