

The Landry News

Recommended for Grades 4-6

Book Summary: The Landry News

Cara enjoys telling the news in her own newspaper, *The Landry News*. Mr. Larson, her teacher, enjoys reading the newspaper in class and not teaching. When Cara calls him out for failing to be a good teacher, it not only spurs Mr. Larson to begin teaching again but it gets the entire class excited about making their own newspaper. With their teacher as their guide, the kids expand *The Landry News* and soon the entire school is reading it.

The principal, Dr. Barnes, who has been looking for an excuse to fire Mr. Larson, keeps an eye on the project until he finds the evidence he has been waiting for.

[SPOILER]

Cara receives a story about divorce from a kid's point of view. Moved by it, she includes it in the next issue of the paper. Dr. Barnes accuses Mr. Larson of publishing private and inappropriate subjects in a school newspaper and calls him to a disciplinary hearing. The class creates a new paper, *The Guardian*, which they used to spread awareness of the attack on freedom of the press, which Dr. Barnes is ringleading.

At the hearing, the kid who wrote the article reads it aloud and Mr. Larson praises the students for their work with the paper, which he considers one of the greatest accomplishments as a teacher. The disciplinary action against him is dismissed. As the people leave the hearing, Cara passes out an editorial piece which declares Mr. Larson the heart of the class' school year.

Author Biography: Andrew Clements

Andrew Clements was born May 29, 1949 in Camden, New Jersey. He grew up loving to read and in his senior year of high school he was handed back a poem with a note that it should be published. He graduated from Northwestern University with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and from National Louis University with a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. While teaching, he began to write songs. In 1996, he wrote his first novel, *Frindle*, which went on to receive numerous awards and publication in several languages. He lives in Westborough, Massachusetts with his wife Rebecca. They have four children: Charles, George, Nathaniel and John.



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Discussion Questions: The Landry News

1. Each chapter title is written as a news headline. Do you think this was a good choice made by the author? Why or why not?
 2. Mr. Larson believes the best way to teach kids is to let them teach themselves. What are some ways this style of teaching might work? What are some ways that it won't work?
 3. Compare Mr. Larson's classroom with yours. How are they the same? How are they different?
 4. Mrs. Landry scolds Cara for saying mean things about Mr. Larson, but Cara points out that editorials are supposed to express opinions. Who is right? Why? How could Cara have written the article with mercy?
 5. How is the class different on Monday? Is this a good change? Why or why not?
 6. Joey convinces Cara to use a computer to create the newspaper so they can have even more copies to distribute. Do you think this is a good idea with Cara's reputation of causing trouble? Why or why not? What are some other hobbies she might be good at? What kind of hobbies are you good at?
 7. The principal, Dr. Barnes, insists that he receive a copy of each of the newspapers when they are printed so that he can review them. How might Dr. Barnes' involvement change the nature of *The Landry News*? Should the newspaper have remained in Mr. Larson's classroom? Why or why not?
 8. Mr. Larson teaches the class about the freedom of the press. Why is this an important thing to have? Think about the First Amendment. How does this protect important rights? What do you think would our country be like without that amendment?
 9. As the newspaper grows, more sections are added to it. What do you consider the essential parts of a newspaper? Why? Does *The Landry News* contain all the parts to make it a real newspaper? Why or why not?
 10. When *The Landry News* is suspended, the class creates a new paper, *The Guardian*. Do you think writing this paper make things better or worse for the class and Mr. Larson? Why?
 11. Think about the parts of a story—the beginning, the conflict, the rising action, the climax and the resolution. Can you identify these parts within the book? Is one part more important than the other? If so, which one?
 12. What did you think about the verdict of the disciplinary hearing? Was this the right decision? Why or why not? Do you think *The Landry News* will be continued by the class? Why?
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