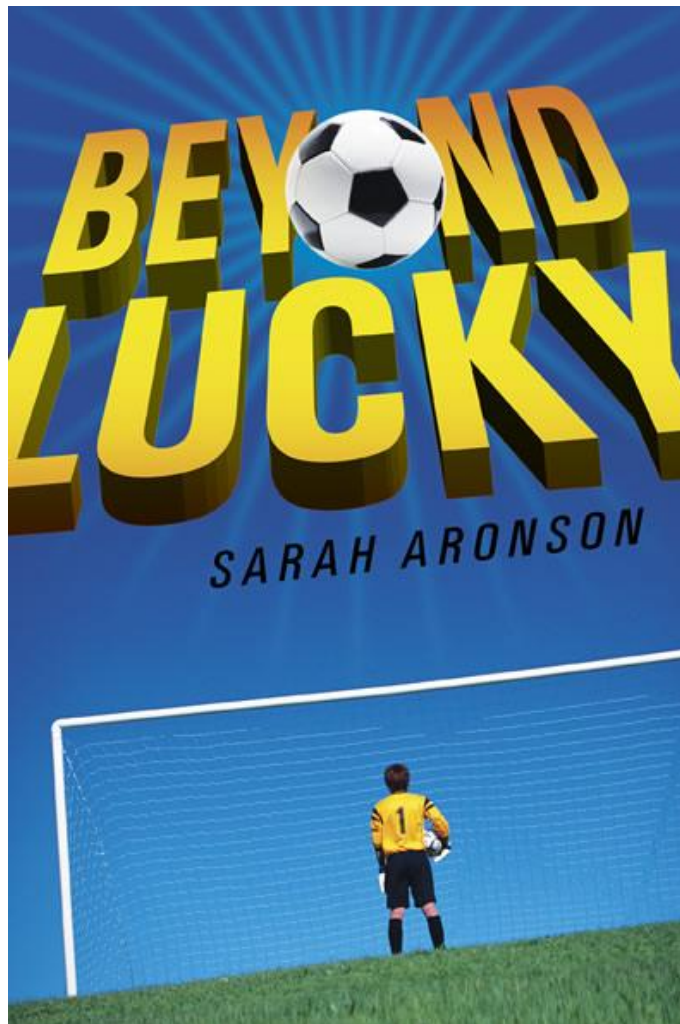


A Teacher's Guide to  
**BEYOND LUCKY**

Written By Sarah Aronson



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Published by Dial Books for Young Readers, An Imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

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Ages 8-12; ISBN 978-0-8037-3520-0

## **PRAISE FOR BEYOND LUCKY**

“Aronson skillfully dodges the predictability of sports-themed books by creating multilayered characters and an intriguing whodunit... Aronson (Head Case) includes a lot of fun on-field action, but the off-field story is just as interesting... Aronson’s graceful storytelling will keep even non-soccer buffs turning pages.”

*~Publisher’s Weekly*

## STORY SUMMARY

It's not exactly that Ari Fish is obsessive compulsive. It's just that he believes in luck. That's why he recites American presidents (in order), always showers with his left hand, and talks to his poster of Wayne Timcoe (the greatest goalkeeper ever to graduate from Somerset Valley High) before he goes on to the soccer pitch. Thomas Jefferson may have said that luck is all a matter of hard work, but Ari knows that sometimes luck is... luck. And to win at soccer you need it.

When Ari finds a rare Wayne Timcoe trading card, he knows his luck has changed. Now he's going to start in the net. Mac MacDonald will learn to play nicely with Parker Llewellyn, the only girl on the team. And Ari's fire-fighter brother will come home safely. Right? But then Ari's Timcoe card disappears. With his luck finally run out, what can Ari put in its place?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo Credit: Lynn Bohannon

Sarah Aronson holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. This is her second book for Children and Young Adults. Her first Young Adult novel, *Head Case* (Roaring Brook Press 2007), was named a 2008 Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers. Sarah Aronson lives in Hanover, New Hampshire, with her family.

# TEACHER'S GUIDE CONTENTS

## 1. Pre-Reading Activities

Activities and discussion starters to activate students' prior knowledge.

## 2. Chapter Guides

Chapter guides may be used to encourage whole class discussions, lead teacher-guided reading groups, or to provide structure for students working either in cooperative small groups or independently. **The guide is not meant to be assigned to students in its entirety.**

Each chapter guide includes:

- ▶ **Vocabulary** that might be new for your students. Choose a few words from each list and guide students in using context clues to infer meanings.
- ▶ **Discussion Starters** inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy that lead students from basic comprehension to higher level thinking skills.
- ▶ **Predicting** where students are invited to make predictions based on their analysis of the characters' traits in the story.

The discussion guides address the following learning standards:

√ Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

√ Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

√ Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

√ Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression

√ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

√ Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence,

√ Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.

### 3. Culminating Activities

Following the chapter guides, you'll find suggested culminating projects that address the eight multiple intelligences identified by Dr. Howard Gardner: Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Naturalistic, Verbal-linguistic and Visual-spatial. Consider having students choose a culminating activity that best matches their learning styles.

### 4. Author Interview with SARAH ARONSON

## PRE-READING

1. Look at the title and cover. What does the title mean?
2. Read the book's cover blurb. What is this story about? Make a t-chart with the background knowledge you'll bring to the story and questions you have before reading (see below):

<i>What I already know about participating as a member of a team:</i>	<i>Questions and predictions I have about the story:</i>

3. What superstitions do you have? Do you believe in luck? Explain your answers.
4. Choose a favorite quote from a song or a famous person. Explain why you like this quote.

**Each chapter begins with a quote from a U.S. president. Before reading a chapter, use the quote to predict what might happen next. When you've finished the chapter, reflect on how the quote relates to what you've read.**

The following vocabulary may be new for your students. Encourage them to use context clues to unlock the meanings of the following terms related to soccer and Judaism:



# CHAPTER 1

## Word Study

rituals	solitaire	stakes	obsessive
recite	superstitions	hamstrings	omen
morose	gloom and doom	stakes	adversary
vital component	rapier	stats	fluke
premier	dominating	petitioned	publicity stunt
selectman	taunts	ricochets	lure

## Discussion Starters

1. What does Ari eat for breakfast? Why? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Ari want to leave for the try-outs before the newspaper is delivered? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a lucky charm or ritual you have. What happens when you do without it? (*application*)
4. Which metaphors for soccer does Ari use? What do these comparisons reveal about Ari's feelings for the game? (*analysis*)
5. How might Ari respond to the quote at the beginning of this chapter? (*synthesis*)
6. Ari describes himself as "the most unlucky person in the world." Is this accurate? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

## Predict

How will the try-outs go? Will Ari make the team?

## CHAPTER 2

### Word Study

gesture	laughingstock	tormented	Karmic energy
untimely demise	disintegrated	gruesome	Repentance
sync	eccentric	pessimistic	gender neutral
Episcopalian	retrospect	premeditated	intentionally

### Discussion Starters

1. Why doesn't Ari attend the first day of try-outs? (*knowledge*)
2. Explain why Ari tells Mac to, "Stop acting like me." (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when a dream of yours came true in an unexpected way. (*application*)
4. Compare what Ari's friends say after the game with what Ari thinks they mean. Where do you think the truth lies? (*analysis*)
5. Read the quote by John Quincy Adams at the start of this chapter. How will Mischelotti's accident influence the course of Ari's upcoming year? (*synthesis*)
6. Ari defends Mac by saying that Mischelotti's broken leg was a freak accident. Do you agree? How might Coach evaluate this incident? How would Mischelotti view it? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Coach choose Parker over Ari? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 3

### Word Study

controversial	iffy	delicacy	draft dodger
nurse practitioner	facial laceration	concussion	adrenaline
mantra	evacuate	smoke jumper	remote
ironic	obituary	warding	cocky
smoke inhalation	virtues	devotes	

### Discussion Starters

1. Why did Mac used to live with Ari and his family? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Ari's father cut from the newspaper? Why? (*comprehension*)
3. When Ari's mom finds out that his try-outs didn't go well, she says, "So be it," which Ari calls "the loser's mantra." What do you say to console yourself when your plans don't work out? What might you say to a friend? (*application*)
4. Use Sam's email to analyze his character. What is important to him? (*analysis*)
5. Ari doesn't want to talk about the try-outs to his parents. Write an email that Ari might write to Sam describing what happened. (*synthesis*)
6. Steve the Sports Guy says, "Sometimes your luck goes up; sometimes it goes down." Ari wonders if luck is cyclical. What do you think? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Is Ari's luck about to go up or come crashing down?

## CHAPTER 4

### Word Study

formality	on all counts	census
store circular	destined	in the clutch
harnessing	prosperity	implications

### Discussion Starters

1. Who telephones Ari? (*knowledge*)
2. How was Ari's bar mitzvah reading chosen? How does he feel about it? (*comprehension*)
3. Ari says, "For just one day, I'd like to be Mac. For just one day, I'd like to be sure that I was going to get exactly what I want." Who would you like to be for one day? Why? (*application*)
4. What does Ari's horoscope mean? Read your own daily horoscope this evening. Was it accurate? How might it have affected your day if you'd read it this morning? (*analysis*)
5. Write a horoscope for Ari on the day of the try-outs based on how he feels the morning went. (*synthesis*)
6. Art insists that Mac is a good friend. Do you agree? Would you want Mac as a friend? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What is the lucky thing Ari needs to do?

## CHAPTER 5

### Word Study

awning	statistically	circulation	marvel
inventory	avid	perimeter	vintage
smothering	mimics	chrome	aviator

### Discussion Starters

1. What type of cards does Ari collect? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Ari still collect cards, yet Mac no longer does? (*comprehension*)
3. What does Mrs. Elliot remember about Ari when she was his teacher? What would your teachers most remember about you? (*application*)
4. How can Ari tell when Mac thinks a girl is cute? How do you think Mac feels about Becky? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (*analysis*)
5. Ari says, "My horoscope was my horoscope even before I read it, and still, on the field, I stunk." How might Ari react to these words after finding the Wayne Timcoe card? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate Mrs. Elliot's character. Back up your evaluation with evidence from the text. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will the Wayne Timcoe card change Ari's luck? How?

## CHAPTER 6

### Word Study

uncanny	billboard	anticipate	complex
hobble	washout	adversity	cite
consecutive	cynics	immobilized	bleak
grit	Achilles tendon	rehab	ploy
mounting	reissue	mandatory	contention

### Discussion Starters

1. What did four-year-old Ari do after Wayne Timcoe made his famous save? (*knowledge*)
2. What happened to Wayne Timcoe? (*comprehension*)
3. Ari talks about Wayne Timcoe being “in the zone” when he plays soccer. What puts you in the zone? How would an observer know that you were in the zone? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Ari, Sam, and Mac never gave up on Wayne Timcoe? (*analysis*)
5. If Parker were to email someone after her call from Coach, what might it say? (*synthesis*)
6. Sam told Ari, “Remember, fight to the end for what is important to you.” Is this good advice? In what instance(s) might it be poor advice? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

How will Sam react to Ari's news?

## CHAPTER 7

### Word Study

theories	Indian Summer	living proof	accurate
distribute	alternate	conniption	wily
stewing	sulk	neutral	gory

### Discussion Starters

1. What does Ari do for the first time? (*knowledge*)
2. Why hasn't Sam answered Ari's email yet? (*comprehension*)
3. Read the theories about luck at the start of the chapter. Which one do you believe? Explain why. (*application*)
4. Coach says, "Ari, I love this new attitude." To what do you attribute this change in Ari's confidence? (*analysis*)
5. List the pros and cons Ari and Mac might list for having Parker on their team. What do these lists say about the two boys? (*synthesis*)
6. Ari doesn't want to know the details of Sam's smoke-jumping job. Ari says, "Too many specifics lead to too much thinking." What does he mean? Do you agree? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

When will Sam be back in touch?

## CHAPTER 8

### Word Study

erudition	sustain	casualties	dispute
envision	coincidence	revealing	melodramatic
goon	ferocious	pathetic	essentially
deny	plead the fifth	liability	insurmountable

### Discussion Starters

1. What is Parker's dream? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Mac leave the lunch table? (*comprehension*)
3. To support the team, the girls design a poster and decorate the players' names. How would you decorate your own name as a reflection of your personality? (*application*)
4. During Ari's conversation with Parker, how do his thoughts differ from his dialogue? What does this say about his character? (*analysis*)
5. The Civil War is one of Ari's "five favorite topics after the presidents." List your own top five favorite topics. Which ones would you and Ari have in common? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate Parker's character. Use evidence from the text to support your evaluation. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Mac ever accept Parker as his teammate? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 9

### Word Study

faze	flinching	calluses	stabilizes
notorious	recite	corny	Karma
cue	accelerates	cult	profusely

### Discussion Starters

1. Why is this an important day for Ari? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Ari know the direction in which Mac will kick the ball toward the goal? (*comprehension*)
3. Coach tells Ari, "For the first time, you're playing like you know you're good." Tell or write about a time when confidence (or the lack thereof) made a difference in something you did. (*application*)
4. How does Ari interpret his horoscope? What is your interpretation? How does Ari's mother interpret "showing wisdom in deep water?" (*analysis*)
5. Compare and contrast Ari's mother with Mac's mother. Which parent would you prefer? Why? (*synthesis*)
6. Is Ari's mother superstitious? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

How will the game go? Who will play well, and who won't?

## CHAPTER 10

### Word Study

lunges	hamstrings	ammonia
fazed	premiere	to scout
phenomenal	breakaway	core
sluggish	precision	resumes
cheap shot	hype	bloopers
morose	valid	kingpin of the mob

### Discussion Starters

1. Who came to watch the game? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Mac feel about his performance in the game? Why? (*comprehension*)
3. Coach says, "Ari Fish, you are hotter than a fire in the hills of Arizona. Ari thinks this is a weird analogy. Come up with an analogy that Ari would like better. (*application*)
4. Who do you think the man in the aviator sunglasses is? Why do you think he comea to the game but doesn't speak to anyone? (*analysis*)
5. Why did Coach give Parker a high-five but doesn't do the same for Mac? Write or act out what Coach and Parker might have said to each other at half-time. (*synthesis*)
6. How would you evaluate Parker's performance in this game? How might her performance change in the future? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

If the scouts approach anyone on the team, who will it be, and why?

## CHAPTER 11

### Word Study

shiner	desperate	paranoid	biceps
undesirable	lapse in judgment	moot	intimidate
nautical	crullers	trounced	endorsement
genderfication	mount a protest	to do something rash	intentionally
to take a stand	hypothetical	talisman	reverence
inaugural	berserk		

### Discussion Starters

1. What is Mac's plan? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Eddie annoy Mac? (*comprehension*)
3. Research William Howard Taft's death to find out why Ari compares him to Big Dave Whittaker. (*application*)
4. Ari says, "When Mac makes me mad, I always end up apologizing. Usually before lunch." What does this say about Ari's friendship with Mac? (*analysis*)
5. If Parker and her friends had made a plan to replace Ari with Parker as starting keeper, what might their plan look like? Would it work? How would Ari react if he learned of such a plan? How would Parker react if she learned of Mac's plan? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate the relationship between Mac and Big Dave. How do they feel about each other? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Ari play along with Mac's plan? Will the others?

## CHAPTER 12

### Word Study

jacked up	contained	carbon monoxide	inhalation
livestock	hunky-dory	abroad	recruits
migraine	wrings	vague	preciseness
conscious	invades	withdrawing	external
replenish	lie low	essential	policy

### Discussion Starters

1. Why does Sam steer the conversation away from his job? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Ari hate his digital clock? Why can't he sleep? (*comprehension*)
3. What does Ari do to help make himself fall asleep? What do you do? What is most effective? (*application*)
4. When Ari reads his horoscope, he says, "Before Wayne, that kind of horoscope would have freaked me out. It would have made me paranoid. But now, with the power of Wayne, it doesn't." Write or tell how Ari would have interpreted this horoscope before finding the Wayne Timcoe card. (*analysis*)
5. What do you make of Parker's appearance in Ari's dream? If Parker had a "conscious dream" of Ari, what might it be? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate the relationship that Sam and his parents have. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Ari says that nothing will go wrong. What could go wrong? What's the worst that can happen? What is the best that could happen?

# CHAPTER 13

## 14

### Word Study

controversial	exploit	corny	ferocious
distractions	intimidate	psych	arrogant
wallop	advance	ricochets	conniption
incidental	searing	deflect	

### Discussion Starters

1. What does Coach think of Ari's pre-game rituals? How does Coach react to the Wayne Timcoe card? (*knowledge*)
2. What gives Ari an uneasy feeling before the game? (*comprehension*)
3. Who was Benedict Arnold? Compare and contrast him with Ari. Why would Mac think Ari is a "Benedict Arnold"? (*application*)
4. When Mac tells Ari, "I hate to break it to you, but a card is never going to change the way we play," Ari thinks, "He loves breaking it to me, but I think it can and I tell him so." What does this mean? What do these statements reveal about the dynamics of the boys' friendship? (*analysis*)
5. Write or act out the conversation that Coach and Mac might have after this play. (*synthesis*)
6. List the characters who could be blamed for the East Liverpool goal. Who is mostly at fault? Who will take the most blame? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

How will the game end? What role will Parker play? Which team will win?

## CHAPTER 15

### Word Study

"talks me off the ledge"	tribute	immortals	pragmatic
trickles	substitutions	nab	vengeance
intentional	flinches	hoist	relish

### Discussion Starters

1. What is Beer Man's take on the game? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Mac respond when Mr. Fish offers to take Ari and Mac for a milkshake after the game? (*comprehension*)
3. When Mac is pulled out of the game, Ari says, "When Mac is mad, you have to let him walk it off. Alone." How would Ari describe what you do when you're mad? (*application*)
4. When Coach threatens to replace Mac with Parker, Ari says, "It's the oldest motivational technique there is, and I know for a fact, it will never work on Mac." Why not? Would it work on Ari? On you? (*analysis*)
5. Beer Man leaves before Ari can introduce him to Mac. What might the conversation have been like if they had met? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate the dynamics between Parker and her dad. Do you think she wanted Ari to practice with her after the game? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will the team's attitude toward Mac start to change? If so, how?

## CHAPTER 16

### Word Study

sift	figment	potential
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### Discussion Starters

1. What happens when Ari looks in his soccer bag? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Mac react when he hears about the Timcoe card? (*comprehension*)
3. When talking to Big Dave, how does Ari psych himself up to keeping insisting on talking with Mac? How would you psych yourself up in a similar situation? (*application*)
4. Read Ari's description of what usually happens when Ari calls Mac with a problem. How is this time different? Why is Mac acting strangely? (*analysis*)
5. What advice would Sam give about the following: Mac, Parker, the Timcoe card, the next soccer game? (*synthesis*)
6. Is Mac telling Ari the truth about having to do homework? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What happened to Ari's card? Will it turn up? If so, under what circumstances?

## CHAPTER 17

### Word Study

decomposing	illogical	pointless	flutter
bulge	triceps	insecure	skeptical
to make a scene	jeopardize	intimidate	overcompensating
a handout	a curiosity		

### Discussion Starters

1. What spurs Ari's mother to help him find the Timcoe card? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Parker do when Ari tells her he's lost the Timcoe card? (*comprehension*)
3. Parker says her father won't let the press interview her until she's a starting player. Write or act out a mock interview with her now. (*application*)
4. When Parker tells Ari her theories about why Mac doesn't like her, he thinks she's being too sensitive. Do you agree? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Write or act out how Ari's next conversation with Mac might go. What are the possible scenarios? (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Mac took the Timcoe card? Why or why not? If he did, would this be grounds for Ari to end the friendship? Explain your reasoning. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Ari confront Mac about the card?

## CHAPTER 18

### Word Study

possession	shuffle	pathetic	skeptic
beckons	discern	sine wave	razzing
revs	cops an attitude	offended	morality
vintage	scowls	stance	loopholes
urinal	sacred	residue	

### Discussion Starters

1. What does Ari do to try to avoid school? (*knowledge*)
2. Which presidents does Ari think of as he's walking to school with Mac? (*comprehension*)
3. Ari lists the "holy rules for guys." Make your own list of sacred rules that you and your friends follow. (*application*)
4. When Ari tells Mac about Parker helping to find the Timcoe card at the field, how do Ari's thoughts differ from his dialogue? Why doesn't he tell Mac what he's really thinking? (*analysis*)
5. How might this scene have gone if Mac and Ari had been alone? Write or act out how Ari might have asked Mac about taking the card, and what Mac's response might have been. (*synthesis*)
6. How does Mac react when Ari indirectly accuses him of stealing the card? Do you think he's guilty? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Where will Ari sit at lunch? Who will sit with him? Tell how Ari and Mac might repair their friendship.

## CHAPTER 19

### Word Study

intercepts	gutsy	envision	to rib someone
sacrificed	liability	consistency	foremost
momentum	passages	shallow victory	census
burdens	rivals		

### Discussion Starters

1. What happens when Ari leaves the lunch table with his tray? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Ari think it's important to sit at his usual lunch table? Why doesn't he accept Parker's invitation to sit with her at lunch? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you felt left out of your own group of friends. What advice would you give Ari? (*application*)
4. Ari wonders if he would have been better off without ever having found the Timcoe card. What do you think? Explain your answer. (*analysis*)
5. Choose one of the following characters and retell the lunch scene from their point of view: Mac, Parker, Eddie. Have two other classmates do the same with those characters you did not choose. Compare the points of view. For whom do you feel the most sympathy? Why? (*synthesis*)
6. The rabbi says that Ari's responsibilities on the field and off could be considered burdens or blessings. List Ari's responsibilities in a Venn diagram. Which responsibilities could fit into both categories? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Why isn't Sam answering Ari's emails? What advice will he have for Ari?

## CHAPTER 20

### Word Study

coring	scurries	scrubs	morose
glum	collage	varsity letters	wuss
to tempt fate	trudge	disown	

### Discussion Starters

1. How does Mrs. Fish react to Sam's email? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Ari feel after reading Sam's email and seeing the attached photos? (*comprehension*)
3. When Sam was in high school, his parents let him write his favorite quotes on his bedroom walls. Fill a page with quotes you might write on your own wall. (*application*)
4. When Ari carries his soccer bag downstairs, he says, "The bag feels heavy. Very heavy." Why does he say this? What metaphor does the bag represent? (*analysis*)
5. When the rabbi asks Ari's mom how Sam is doing, she only says that he is fine and that they are proud of him. Ari thinks, "Clearly Mom does not tell the rabbi everything." Write or act out what Ari's response might be if the rabbi asked him the same questions. How would his answer compare to his mother's answer? (*synthesis*)
6. When the rabbi talks about Noah's son, Ari thinks he's really talking about him. Who else might the rabbi be talking about? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Ari tells the rabbi he's not worried about today's game. Is Ari telling the truth? How will today's game go? Will the tension between Mac and Ari show up on the field?

## CHAPTER 21

### Word Study

commissioner	lopsided	insurmountable	sarcastic
gloating	precious metal	hindsight	vital
intercedes	inevitably		

### Discussion Starters

1. Why is Ari late to the game? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Parker's father react when Ari arrives and Parker goes from the goal to the bench? (*comprehension*)
3. Pretend you are Coach. Write or tell how you would deal with this latest situation between Ari and Mac. (*application*)
4. Why do you think Ari reacts so strongly when Mac accuses Parker of taking the Timcoe card? (*analysis*)
5. Is Mac telling the truth about the Timcoe card? How would he know if Parker took the card? "Interview" both Mac and Parker and let them each tell their own version of what happened to Ari's card. (*synthesis*)
6. Is the friendship between Mac and Ari strong enough to survive this latest incident? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Did Parker take the card? How will she do when she takes Ari's place in the game?

## CHAPTER 22

### Word Study

unconscious	bachelor	fuming	to deck someone
tolerate	authorities	forfeiting	swami
hustle	uncontested	laterally	throb
infiltrating	relents	righteous	trumps
spur of the moment	custom	ballistic	concussion
to frame someone	concussion	sulk	pristine

### Discussion Starters

1. Why does Coach take Mac out of the game? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Coach put Mac back in the game? (*comprehension*)
3. Parker is upset when she learns that Ari knew about Mac's plan, yet never warned her. Why didn't he? Write or tell about a time when you heard something negative about a friend. Did you tell your friend? Why or why not? Did your friend ever find out? (*application*)
4. Has your opinion of Parker's father changed at all? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*analysis*)
5. Write or discuss what you would say if you were Coach at the next team meeting. (*synthesis*)
6. Who do you believe, Mac or Parker? Explain why. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Ari ever learn who really took the Timcoe card?

## CHAPTER 23

### Word Study

throbs	sincere	ringing endorsement
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### Discussion Starters

1. Who comes to Ari's house? Why? (*knowledge*)
2. Why won't Ari take Parker's calls? (*comprehension*)
3. Something about Mac's story doesn't ring true for Ari. Tell or write about a time when you wanted to believe someone, yet couldn't bring yourself to do so. Did you ever discover the truth? Explain what happened. (*application*)
4. Review the conversation between Mac and Ari. Do you believe Mac? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*analysis*)
5. Write or act out what might have happened if Ari had taken Parker's call. Next, write or act out what might have happened if Parker had showed up at Ari's house while Coach and Mac were there. (*synthesis*)
6. Read Ari's description of the sky at the end of the chapter. Evaluate this description as a metaphor. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What will happen the next time the team is together? What will happen when Ari sees Parker?

## CHAPTER 24

### Word Study

correlation	slogan	grim	data
prune	commiserating	resolve	burden
rationalize	barricades	vicinity	flinches

### Discussion Starters

1. What advice do Ari's parents give him before he leaves for school? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Ari make his "big, difficult speech" when he arrives at school? (*comprehension*)
3. After reading Parker's emails, Ari wishes Abraham Lincoln would have "...said something about doubt and overcoming it." Pen your own phrase that would help Ari. (*application*)
4. Research the Battle of Chickamauga. How is this battle an analogy for Ari's situation? (*analysis*)
5. How might the conversation have gone between Ari and Parker had they been alone? (*synthesis*)
6. When Mac enters the conversation with Ari and Parker, how do Eddie and Soup react? Why? How do they feel about Mac? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Parker quit the team? Will Ari apologize? Explain your reasoning.

## CHAPTER 25

### Word Study

mandatory	aggravating	tolerate	overanalyzing
exponentially	incrementally	sliver	frank
dazed	dreading		

### Discussion Starters

1. Why is Coach working the team so hard? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Parker perform in the practice? (*comprehension*)
3. Before falling asleep, Ari says, "In the darkness, I am finally ready to do what's right." Will he do what's right? Tell or write about a time when planning the right thing seemed easy, but following through was difficult. (*application*)
4. Both Parker and Mischelotti have suggested that the Timcoe card is a curse. Do you agree? Do you think Ari agrees? How will this latest string of events affect his view of luck? (*analysis*)
5. Ari has been weighing the pros and cons of "doing the right thing." What is the right thing? Plan out what Ari needs to do. (*synthesis*)
6. Ari's dad tells him, "Talk to [Mac]. Be frank. Tell him you forgive him. He'll come around." Is this good advice? Will it work? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What is the news about Sam? Will Ari still apologize to Parker and confront Mac?

## CHAPTER 26

### Word Study

correspondent	re-ignited	billows	ridge
jowls	enormity	unanimous	adrenaline
rubble	charred	salvage	smoke inhalation
profusely	retaliation		

### Discussion Starters

1. What happened to Sam? (*knowledge*)
2. How do Ari's teammates support him while he waits for news about Sam? (*comprehension*)
3. What are some life questions that Ari doesn't feel the rabbi can answer? On index cards, list some life questions that you would like answers to. In a small group, trade and shuffle the cards. How would you answer your classmates' life questions? (*application*)
4. Compare and contrast the way Ari's mom and dad each cope with the wait for news about Sam. (*analysis*)
5. Sam's base manager says of his men's performance: "My guys knew what to do. We train for exactly this type of situation. They are a team and I am proud of all of them." How did playing soccer ultimately prepare Sam for his job as a smokejumper? (*synthesis*)
6. After Ari watches the news reports about the fire, he says, "Sam never failed. He was always in control. He fought for what was important to him. He was a hero. He was Superman. At least that's what I believed." Is Sam still a hero? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What is Ari's plan for Parker? Will it work? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 27

### Word Study

take the plunge	dejected	ricochets	uncontested
discombobulated	atrocious	mastermind	media onslaught
exceptionally	sedan	encrusted	letdown
dedications	illegible	crane	haphazard
arbitrary	undermanned	bribery	anticlimactic

### Discussion Starters

1. Who is Beer Man? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Ari finally come to realize about soccer and teamwork? (*comprehension*)
3. Ari is disappointed when he first realizes who Beer Man is. Write or tell about a time when you were disappointed after meeting someone. (*application*)
4. When the Wayne Timcoe sign is painted over and the Exxon sign fixed, Ari says, "It's got to be a sign." What is he talking about? Do you agree? Explain your answer. (*analysis*)
5. When Ari tells Sam about Wayne Timcoe, Sam says, "You have to be really brave to walk away from instant fame. I admire that." Do you agree? Why do you think Wayne does this? How would Mac react to Sam's statement? (*synthesis*)
6. What do you think of Sam's decision not to come home for Ari's game? Ari says of Sam, "...I just wish he'd do the right thing, come home and be my brother." What is the right thing? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Why does Ari destroy the Wayne Timcoe card? Will it affect his luck? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 28

### Word Study

flowery	platitudes	reclining	walking cast
stupendous	fluke	undetectable	vintage
pose	lug	humble	slaughter

### Discussion Starters

1. Who comes to watch Ari's game? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Ari interrupt the pep talk at halftime? (*comprehension*)
3. Write or tell about a time in which you were pleasantly surprised to see someone. (*application*)
4. Who did you first think came to watch the game? When did you realize who it is? How does the author set up this moment? (*analysis*)
5. How might Mac narrate the scene at the game if he were there? (*synthesis*)
6. Ari claims he doesn't need the presidents today. He says, "My parents are on the sidelines and my brother is here. I have friends. We have a team. That is all the luck I need." What factors have brought about this change in Ari? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Which character in the book will remain with you the longest? Explain your answer.

## CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

The following projects incorporate Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Consider having students choose culminating projects that best match their learning styles.

### Speaking Out

*(Linguistic, Interpersonal)*

Each chapter in the story begins with a different quote from a U.S. president. These presidential quotes mirror themes from the chapters they precede.

How well do your students know each other? Have students find quotes that best represent their own beliefs or way of viewing life. Hand out index cards and ask them to each write one favorite quote on a card. They should write the name of the person to whom the quote is attributed, but not their own names. Put the cards in a box (including yours!). Let students take turns reading one quote and have the class guess who put the quote in the box. (Alternatively, this may be done in smaller groups).

Have students reflect on how well they could identify their classmates by favorite quotes. Encourage them to start their own favorite quotes journals.

### It's a Sign

*(Naturalistic)*

The faded Wayne Timcoe scoreboard at the soccer field was always an inspiration for Ari. It was an eyesore, so the town had it repainted, this time in support of military personnel overseas.

Look around your school grounds or town. What spot might be considered an eyesore? Plan a class or school-wide beautification project that honors a group or person.

## Soccer Stats

(*Mathematical*)

Visit the FIFA site for soccer statistics around the world.

<http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/statisticsandrecords/index.html>. Have students graph and analyze soccer stats by country or team. What trends do they notice?

## Trading Card

(*Visual-Spatial*)

Ari is an avid collector of soccer trading cards. Create your own soccer trading card featuring one of the main characters. Visit

<http://www.apollostemplates.com/templates-sports/soccer-card-templates.asp> to print out a card with the Somerset Valley team name and your character's name. Add a drawing of what you imagine the character looks like. On the back of the card, add a description of the character.

## Let the Games Begin

(*Bodily-Kinesthetic*)

For a basic explanation of how to play soccer, visit: <http://www.soccer-for-parents.com/support-files/rulesv2.pdf>. Organize a soccer scrimmage (students vs. students, or students vs. teachers). Have your students try playing different positions on the field. Create a class chart where students can rate how they feel about playing each position, then analyze the results. How do students feel about playing keeper, Ari's position? Why do he and Parker both prefer playing keeper?

## Soundtrack

(*Musical*)

Visit [www.listenupalbum.com](http://www.listenupalbum.com) to listen to snippets of songs from the 2010 FIFA World Cup album. Why do you think each song was included on this album?

Make your own soundtrack from the book *Beyond Lucky*. Choose songs that illustrated scenes and emotions from various parts of the plot. Design a CD cover that reflects the book's overall theme. On the inside, include a list of the songs along with the scenes they represent. Explain why you matched these songs with the scenes.

## Obituaries

*(Intrapersonal)*

Ari's father cuts out the obituaries from the newspaper, then writes consoling letters to the families of those who have died. Visit the National Smokejumper Association at <http://smokejumpers.com/main/home.php>. On the menu under *Information*, click on *Obituaries* to read tributes to smokejumpers who have died (most were retired smokejumpers). Choose one and write a letter that you might send to the family.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR SARAH ARONSON



Photo Credit: Lynn Bohannon

**How did you get the idea for *Beyond Lucky*?**

When I first started this book, I wanted to write about a small, quirky town full of quirky people. I wanted to be John Irving. But around draft five, the character of Ari Fish started talking to me. Essentially he said, “This is my story, and you are not John Irving. So pay attention.”

**Once the idea came to you, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?**

This book simmered so long, it was in danger of boiling over and dissipating! I put this book away for a very long time. While it sat, I studied the craft of writing. I read a lot. When I returned to the manuscript, I found that I had changed a lot. I ditched the whole thing and started over on page one. I realized I still knew Ari and his friends. At the time, I felt very brave!

**What were the most challenging and rewarding parts of writing this book?**

There were two moments when this book changed for me. The first was when Parker became a girl. In the early versions, she was a boy named Parker. He was a pretty two-dimensional character—the tough jock. When I realized he was a she, I began to hear her voice and feel the growing tension on the team.

My son, Elliot, offered me inspiration and helped mature Ari’s voice. He is very interested in history, especially the US Presidents. He’s on his HS quiz bowl team and is always looking for new and more obscure presidential trivia. Because *Beyond Lucky* has always been about heroes, I started thinking about the presidents, too, and realized that Ari would care about them the same way Elliot does. I think Ari’s interest in the presidents came out really funny. Each chapter starts with a presidential quote. Our presidents have said some really amazing things—especially about the heroism of the common man.

**Are any of the characters or places in the story modeled after real people or places?**

Are you trying to get me in trouble?

**Although this novel is a work of fiction, did you need to do any research in order to tell this story? If so, please explain your research process.**

I talked to a lot of soccer players. And coaches. I also drew on my family's experiences while my stepson, Ed, was serving in the army in Afghanistan.

**When did you know you wanted to become a writer?**

My writing life began in 2000, when I decided to leave physical therapy due to a back injury. I needed to do something else, but I didn't know what. I looked through Dartmouth College's employment page. There were plenty of offices that needed help. I hesitated. Maybe I could run for school board. I loved politics. When a friend suggested I try writing, I jumped. I was completely naïve. I was a mom with two young children. I thought, 'How hard can it be?'

I joined a writing group and found out — writing IS hard. I stepped back and began reading, reading, reading. I attended SCBWI events. I took an online course in writing for kids and submitted manuscripts that now would make me cringe. Later, I earned an MFA from Vermont College. Now I teach a class on writers.com. I speak at some of those conferences. But I'm still learning. I no longer ask how hard can it be!

**What's the best piece of writing advice you've ever received?**

Try everything.

Write with intention.

Celebrate every milestone.

Buy good chocolate.

I live by those rules.

**What advice do you have for young writers?**

Lately, the advice I offer most is don't fear failure. Every successful person will tell you that they failed plenty of times before they got it right. Fear of failure often poses as the internal editor, the discouraging voice. Don't listen. Take chances. If a

revision doesn't work, revise it again.

I also want to say a little more about celebrating, because our world often forgets that money is not the only way to recognize good work. Writing is hard. So every time something good happens—if you finish a chapter, if you get to page 100, if you receive good feedback/a good rejection/a bad rejection...celebrate. All those things are part of the process. Maybe it's my short attention span, but I work a lot better when I know a reward is right around the corner!

At the Greenhouse Literary website, you can find more tips from me and other writers!

I also participate in two blogs: Through the Tollbooth and The Mixed Up Files of Middle Grade Authors. Both offer a lot of great writing advice. I update my own blog every once in a while, and I post regularly on Facebook.

### **Do you have a writing routine?**

I have a lot of writing rituals!

The one that never changes: I've always believed in balance.

These days, I'm taking a yoga class in the middle of the morning, so I get up early to write. If I can't get to class, I walk first, then write. I set myself regular goals. I usually devote the afternoon to reading or working with my fabulous students at writers.com. I love this community. At some point I procrastinate! When my family gets home, I try to turn everything off. No one can be productive all the time!

I keep a writing journal full of ideas, goals, and personal milestones. It has helped me understand a lot about my writing process. I don't get so worried when I hit a block, because I can see that I've gotten through that obstacle in the past!

### **When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?**

I love to watch sports. I am hooked on my hot yoga class, and whenever I can, I like to ride my bike. I love visiting cities and eating good food. Even though I love to read, I still like watching TV, especially dramas, and going to the theater. And of course, I love hanging out with and cooking for friends. My specialty is a hot and spicy seafood stew that makes your head sweat! What I don't like to do: clean. It would be good if I could stop buying shoes.