

Who's the Boss of You?

By

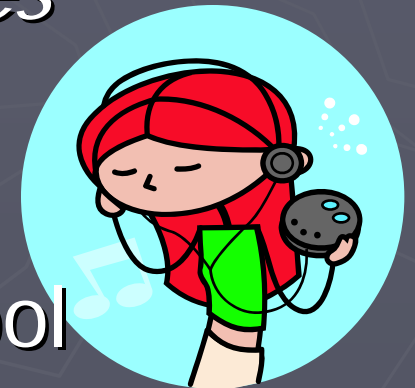
Jeff, Marisol, Chatrian, and Buddy

Who's the Boss of You?

Kids these days have lots of people telling them what to do. Stanley Yelnats in *Holes* had lots of bosses.



We asked 25 students at Rocky Bottom Middle School what adults bossed them around and why they did what they told them to do.



Parents

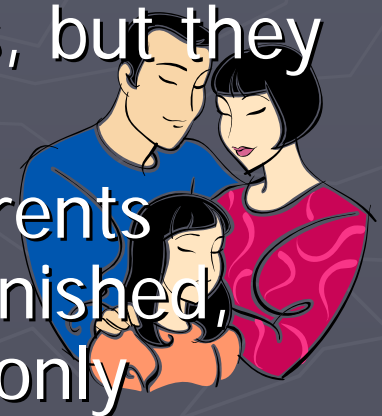
Stanley's parents bossed him around, and because he respected and loved his parents even though they weren't successful and were kind of odd, he usually did what they said.

- His mother told him to write letters to her and he did it even though other kids made fun of him for it.
- He told them lies about his experiences so they wouldn't worry about him.



Like Stanley, all but 5 of the kids we surveyed said they loved and respected their parents and wanted to please them, so they usually obeyed.

- All the kids said they disobeyed their parents sometimes, but most of them felt bad about it afterwards.
- Most of the kids said they thought their parents' rules were wrong sometimes, but they usually obeyed them anyway.
- All of them said they obeyed their parents because they were afraid of being punished, but only 3 of them said that was the only reason.



Teachers

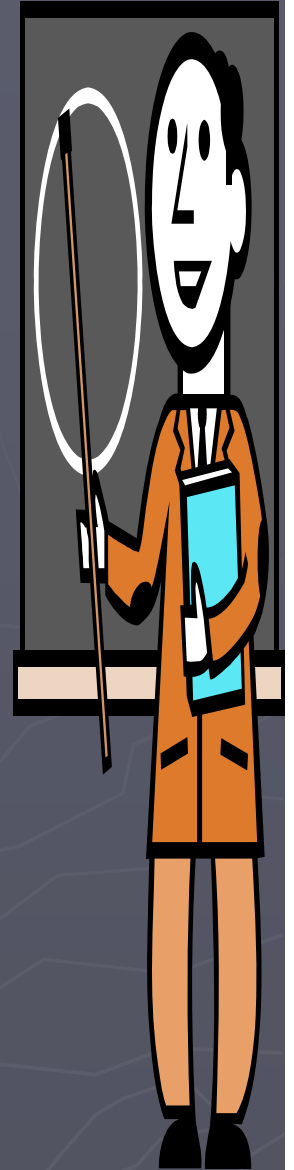
The guards at the camp bossed Stanley around.

- The guards were supposed to teach Stanley to be a better person.
- They were dishonest, unfair, and mean.
- Stanley obeyed them because he was afraid of being punished.
- He tried to do what they told him to, but he ran away and fought against them when he realized how bad they were and they hurt his friend.



Even though it is expected that students follow the rules or directions of their teachers, our survey showed that kids' reactions depended on the teacher.

- Some teachers didn't seem to care how students behaved, so the kids tried to disobey whenever they wanted to.
- Some teachers were too strict, so the kids thought of sneaky ways to disobey.
- Some teachers were cool and fair, so the kids obeyed most of their rules.
- Some kids said that a few teachers gave too much work or graded too hard, so they just didn't do what the teachers told them to do even though they got bad grades.





Police

The police arrested Stanley, and, although he was accused unfairly of a crime he didn't commit, he was forced to obey.

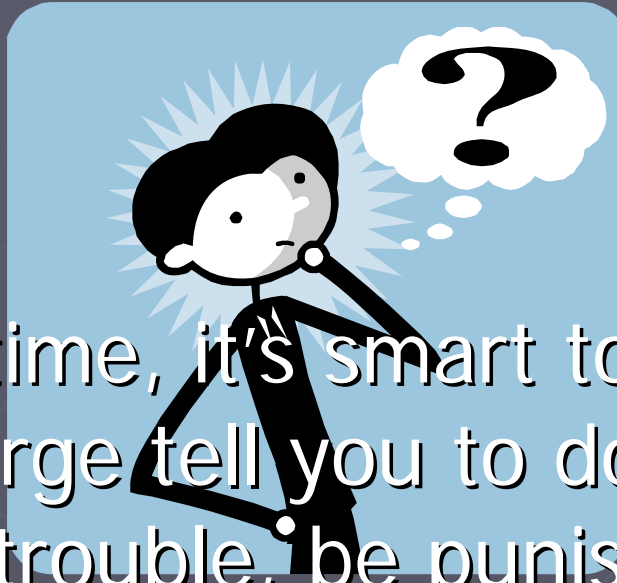
- Stanley had to go to the camp even though he was innocent.
- He went along with it because there was nothing he could do about it.

All but 6 of the kids said that they respected the police and would follow officer instructions if they had to.



- They obey the laws because they don't want to get in trouble.
- Some kids said that some of the cops in town seem to pick on kids and accuse them of shoplifting when they didn't do anything.
- Two kids said they were picked up by the police for something that they really did, but the police were okay about it.
- One kid said the cops always picked on him and his family, and he always tried to trick them.

Who's the Boss of You?



- ▶ Most of the time, it's smart to do what adults in charge tell you to do because you could get in trouble, be punished, or get a bad grade.
- ▶ Sometimes, like Stanley, you have to go against bad adults, and even though it might be hard, it's the right thing to do because other people could be hurt.

Conclusions

The events and characters in *Holes* are similar to events and characters we have known or experienced because...

- Like Stanley, there are people in our lives that hold a position of authority over us and we must choose whether or not to obey.
- Like Stanley, we must decide who to obey and when it is appropriate and when it is not.
- Life is a series of choices, and we must weigh our options and then determine our course of action.

The book *Holes* impacted us because we saw how a boy our age responded to problems.

- When Stanley had to deal with being treated unfairly, he made the best of the situation by trying to get along with people.
- When he saw that something was wrong, he showed a lot of courage and stood up to people in authority to do what was right.
- He was clever and used his wits to accomplish something important.
- Most important of all, he was loyal to his friends and family.