

***SPY SCHOOL* by Stuart Gibbs (Simon & Schuster, 2012)**

Ben is a klutzy nerd who is mistakenly accepted into a secret spy school where he must uncover a plan that is threatening the school. The stakes are high, the laughs are loud and the plot twists are many.

Discussion Questions

**Spy Terms Used in the Book**

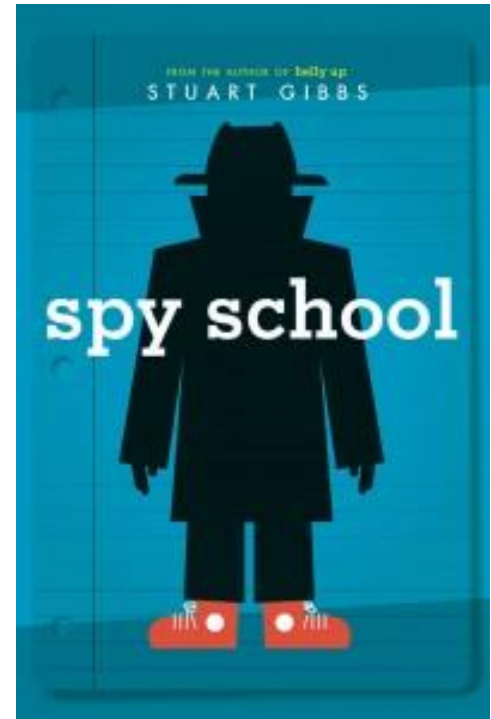
**Mole** - a high-ranking intelligence officer for one agency who covertly feeds information to a rival or enemy agency.

**Bait** – someone or something that will draw out/expose the mole

**Red Herring** - something that misleads or distracts from the relevant or important issue.

**Smoke Screen** - a ruse designed to disguise someone's real intentions or activities

**Double Agent** - an employee of a secret intelligence service, whose primary purpose is to spy on a different target organization, but who, in fact, is a member of the target organization.



1. Once at Spy School, Ben realizes that his classmates were expecting someone who is an expert in cryptography which Ben is not, but what are some of the things he is good at? Ben says that a cryptologist has to be good at word play not just math and logic. What do you think he means by this?
2. Early in the book when Chip tries to get Ben to hack into the mainframe computer, Murray Hill shocks Chip with an electrostatic generator so Ben can escape. Why did Murray rescue Ben?
3. P.75 Erica explains to Ben that he was brought in as part of Operation Creeping Badger – bait to lure out the mole? How did Ben react to this news?
4. Ben is a terrible shot and he feels uncomfortable handling real firearms. What weapons does he use?
5. P.116 Why does Zoe call Ben “Smoke Screen?” (she really believes that Ben is a lean mean killing machine and that he faked the loss to the ninjas - it was a ruse to convince his enemies that he had no skills)
6. What is Jackhammer and why did Erica think it up and send an email to everyone who had access to Ben’s file? (another ruse, Jackhammer is the ultimate code breaker, able to abolish any encryption)

7. A number of characters are posing to be something they are not. Professor Crandall says “the best way to stay in the loop is to pretend you are out of it.” What did he mean by this?
8. Were you surprised by the identity of the Mole? How did the author lead readers away from suspecting Murray? (Use of red herrings - saying that Tina and chip are together when it is really Tina and Murray)
9. Humor: What techniques did the author use to make this book funny? Names: Principal’s name is Barnabus Sidebottom. Classes: Chemistry 105 – Producing Weapons from Cleaning supplies; ISEA Intro to Seducing Enemy Agents. What was your favorite funny scene?
10. When Ben asks how the CIA could put the Principal who was a lousy spy in charge of the entire spy school, Erica says, “our Government at work.” What do you think the author is trying to tell readers about people in charge of our intelligence agencies?

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