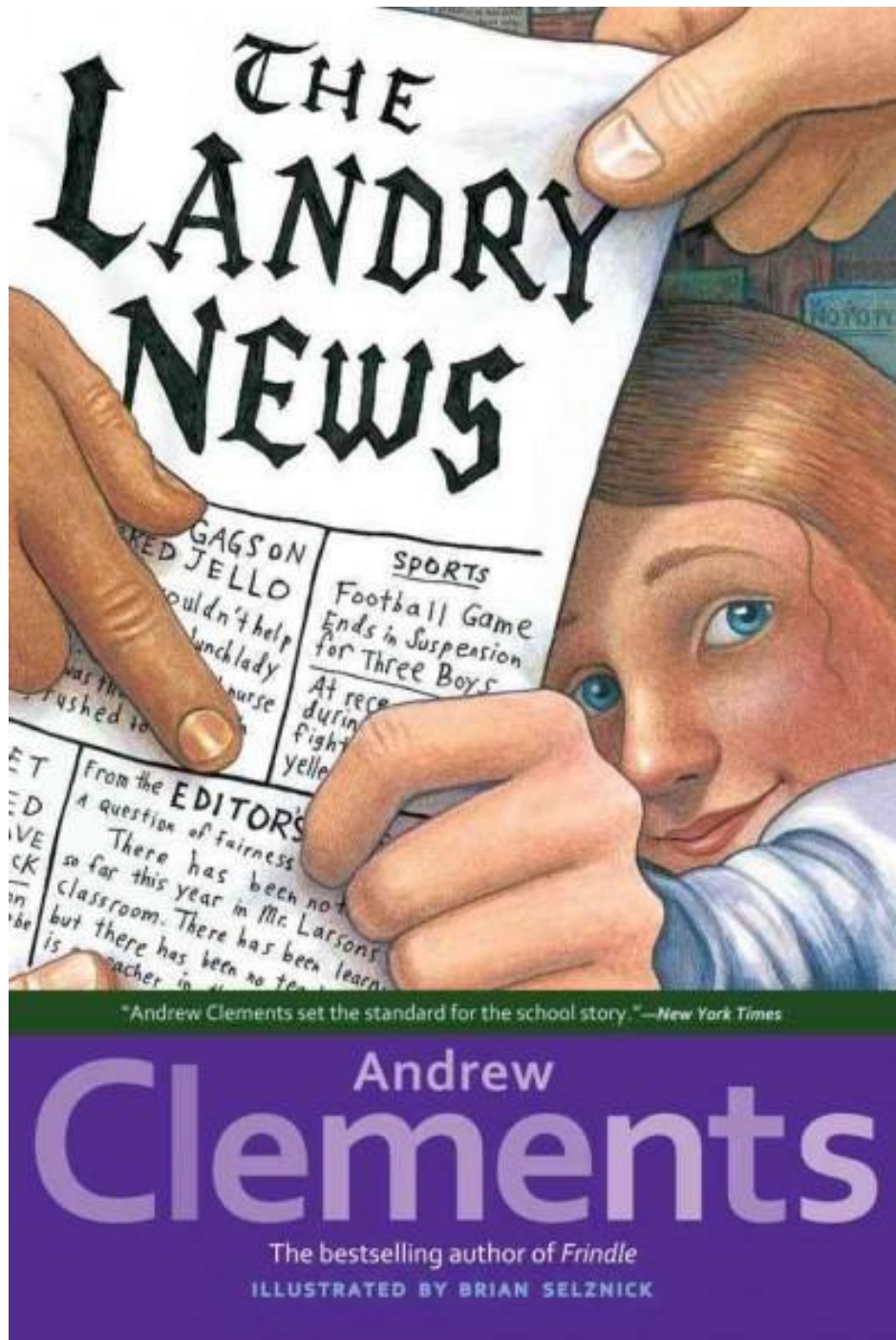


About the book...



Mr. Larson's unique approach to teaching – ignore the students and they will learn – gives Cara plenty of time to pursue her primary interest of journalism. The first edition of "The Landry News" inspires Joey to offer his computer skill so more copies can be printed, and a weekly paper begins. As more students become involved, Mr. Larson emerges from his doldrums and begins teaching again, using the newspaper project to explore the meaning of the First Amendment with his class. When the school principal tries to use an "inappropriate" article in "The Landry News" as a means of disciplining Mr. Larson, the class begins another paper that is published privately with no use of school funds, thus circumventing the principal's control. Cara deftly uses the media to organize support for Mr. Larson prior to and during the disciplinary hearing with the School Board. The First Amendment is a winner!

-Books & Authors

About the Author...



Andrew Clements has all the bases covered in the field of children's books. An avid reader as a child, he later taught the joys of reading to students in elementary and high school, then went on to the world of publishing, acquiring, editing, marketing, and developing quality children's books for several publishing houses.

Clements attended Northwestern University and then earned a master's degree in education at National Louis University. For the next seven years he taught school, both at the grade-school level and high school. "I liked it," Clements related. "The kids and I laughed a lot. I enjoyed the hundreds of little conversations every day, the running jokes – I even liked the noise and the craziness of a Friday afternoon right before Christmas vacation. And I loved reading good books with kids – the kids at school and also the four boys my wife and I had at home. As a teacher, it was a thrill to read a book aloud, and see a whole class listen so carefully to every word, dying to know what would happen next. And I was amazed at the wonderful

discussions a good book can spark. Good books make good things happen in real life. They can make a big difference. So when I was given the chance to start writing for children, I jumped at it."

That chance began, initially, as an editor of children's books at various publishers, including Alphabet Press and Picture Book Studio, where he not only acquired titles but also helped translate and adapt European picture books for the U.S. market. "I didn't start writing books until I was about thirty-five years old," Clements commented. "But I began writing a long time before that. And the way I really got started writing was by reading. Before too long I found myself reading something good and saying to myself, 'I wish I had written that!' I think the more good books you read, the better you learn what good writing sounds like and feels like. Every good writer I know started off as a good reader."

For more information, visit the author's website at <http://www.andrewclements.com/>.

Selected Writings

- *Benjamin Pratt & the Keepers of the School* series:
 - [We the Children](#), 2010.

- [*Fear Itself*](#), 2011.
- [*The Whites of their Eyes*](#) 2012.
- [*About Average*](#), Atheneum Books for Young Readers (NY), 2012.
- [*Extra Credit*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2009.
- [*Lost and Found*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2008.
- [*No Talking*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2007.
- [*Lunch Money*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2005.
- [*The Last Holiday Concert*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2004.
- [*The Report Card*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2004.
- [*A Week in the Woods*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2002.
- [*The School Story*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 2001
- [*Frindle*](#), Simon & Schuster (NY), 1996.

Reviews

Booklist

Fifth-grader Cara Landry's homemade newspaper, *The Landry News*, is all about truth and education. That's why her teacher, Mr. Larson, is such a disappointment: once known for his innovative classes, he now lazily leaves students to learn on their own. Hoping to change this, Cara makes his ineffectual teaching the subject of an editorial, with

both positive and negative repercussions. Mr. Larson is inspired to become a better teacher; Cara's paper becomes a rewarding classroom project. But the paper also provides the principal with an excuse to force Mr. Larson out, involving his students--and readers--in a thought-provoking exploration of freedom of speech, the impact of media blitzes and biases, and effective teaching methods. The depth of characterization, humor, realistic dialogue, and drama will engage readers; also, the accessible examples of responsible reporting, rewards of team efforts, constitutional rights, and how the relationship between students and educators can be mutually beneficial will be educational. Sure to stimulate classroom discussion, the novel offers students and teachers well-rounded perspectives and lessons on reconciling appearances with the real story--in the media as well as in private lives. Gr. 3-7.

School Library Journal

A thought-provoking novel from the author of *Frindle*. Mr. Larson has taught for 20 years and he's burned out. His idea of the open-classroom method is to start his fifth graders on a project and then sit back and relax with coffee and a newspaper. So when Cara Landry writes a newspaper with an editorial about the lack of teaching going on in room 145, the former

"Teacher of the Year" gets very upset. Realizing that the girl is stating the truth, he starts a unit on journalism and the class enthusiastically begins a newspaper. With Cara as editor, the project blossoms. However, when she allows a very personal and poignant story on divorce to be printed, the principal sees it as an opportunity to get rid of Mr. Larson. The teacher then uses the proceedings as a real-life lesson on the First Amendment. The children rally to his support, as does the faculty, and at a public hearing he is vindicated. With chapter headings reading like headlines, the plot moves quickly. Bits of humor lighten the theme of "Truth with Mercy." The author has created believable characters, from the beleaguered Mr. Larson to the intelligent and thoughtful Cara. Readers will cheer for both of them as they move toward the satisfying conclusion. Gr 4-6.

Horn Book

Another terrific school story by the inventor of *Frindle* continues to explore teaching methods and ways of learning as it weaves a tale that could happen in any school. Fifth-grader Cara Landry has not had a smooth school experience since her parents divorced, and now she has the worst teacher in school. (Mr. Larson hands out

worksheets each morning and then sits back to read the paper.) Cara is a contained, bright, creative loner whose goal is to be a journalist. When she publishes her own newspaper, *The Landry News*, and editorializes on the absence of teaching in her classroom, her days of anonymity are over. Cara and Mr. Larson both evolve during the course of the next several weeks: Cara into a popular editor, Mr. Larson into the kind of caring, motivating teacher he used to be. Clements writes with a light touch that allows the text to flow effortlessly for the reader, yet lays out thought-provoking issues such as intellectual freedom that are likely to engender further exploration. Censorship rears its ugly head in the clash between Principal Barnes and unorthodox teacher Mr. Larson. Although this book is for a younger audience, it contains echoes of Paulsen's [*The Boy Who Owned the School*](#) and Avi's [*Nothing But the Truth*](#). Both would-be Mr. Larsons and budding Cara Landrys will find their pictures in these pages.

Discussion Questions

(<https://multcolib.org/landry-news>)

1. Cara is new to Denton Elementary School, but she also wrote a newspaper in her old school. What motivated her to start that newspaper? What was its tone?
2. "Truth is good," Cara's mother says. "But when you are publishing all that truth, just be sure there's some mercy, too." What does she mean by that? Do you agree that mercy is as important as truth?
3. Over the years, Mr. Larson became a lazy and sloppy teacher, and students became bored and restless in his classroom. How was the class's atmosphere good for Cara? Would it be good for you?
4. Mr. Larson was stung by Cara's first editorial, but *The Landry News* ended up reviving his love of teaching. How?
5. *The Landry News* starts small but soon the whole school is reading it. How did Cara's duties change as the newspaper grew? What were the advantages of having a larger readership? What were the risks?
6. Mr. Larson's students know very little about his life outside of school. How much do you know about your teachers? What do you imagine they do in their own time? Do you believe they have

different in-school and out-of-school personalities?

7. Why was the principal so upset by the "Lost and Found" article in *The Landry News*? Would you be?

8. "Some people are newsmakers," observes Cara, "and some aren't". Who are the newsmakers in your school or neighborhood? What makes them so interesting?

Activities

Read the editorials in your local newspaper.

Look at several newspapers and try creating your own newspaper.

Read-Alikes

Avi, [*Nothing but the Truth*](#) (1991)

Memos, diary entries and conversations tell of Philip's attempt to get out of Miss Narwin's class by humming during the playing of the National Anthem. The incident is blown out of proportion as administration, family and media distort the events, resulting in both Philip and Miss Narwin being hurt.

Kate Klise, [*Regarding the Fountain*](#) (1998)

The Dry Creek Middle School drinking fountain has sprung a leak, so principal Walter Russ dashes off a request to Flowing Waters Fountains, Etc. We need a new drinking fountain. Please send a catalog. Designer Flo Waters responds: "I'd be delighted...but please understand that all of my fountains are custom-made." Soon the fountain project takes on a life of its own, one chronicled in letters, postcards, memos, transcripts, and official documents. The school board president is up in arms. So is Dee Eel, of the water-supply company. A scandal is brewing, and Mr. Sam N.'s fifth grade class is turning up a host of hilarious secrets buried deep beneath the fountain.

Michael Winerip, [*Adam Canfield of the Slash*](#) (2005)

Adam Canfield has an overcrowded schedule: baritone horn lessons, jazz band, marching band, Math Olympiad club, Quiz Bowl, Geography Challenge, soccer, swimming, snowflake basketball, running, and Say No to Drugs Community Players. As he says, he's "on the verge

of being enriched to death." The one job he loves, however, is co-editor of the Harris Elementary/Middle School newspaper, *Slash*. But this job turns into a real time stealer that starts when third grader Phoebe wants to do a story on Eddie the Janitor. Eddie suggests that perhaps there is some mishandling of money by the principal; and Adam and co-editor Jennifer are hot on the trail of that story. Added to their investigation is a troubling story about the city council outlawing basketball hoops in parks and driveways. These two junior reporters are finding scandals all over their hometown! Winerip, who has been an education columnist for *The New York Times*, has plenty to say about present-day education, but also plenty of action to keep the pages turning in this first novel.

Walter Dean Myers, [*The Cruisers*](#) (2010)

A group of middle-school students at the DaVinci School for Gifted and Talented Students are learning about the Civil War. When students take sides, supporting either the Confederates or the Union, real issues begin to arise in the hallways. If the drama that has begun from the history lesson

isn't enough to deal with already, Zander Scott also has to worry about his grades. Recently, they've been slipping and he's been told that if they don't get better, he'll have to leave the school. In an effort to gain some extra credit and get his voice heard, Zander convinces his friends to begin an alternative school newspaper called *The Cruiser*. In *The Cruiser*, Zander and his friends Kambui, LaShonda, and Bobbi present different sides of the Civil War argument and ask their fellow students to write back with their own thoughts. Soon, Zander and his friends discover what a powerful tool a newspaper can truly be.



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