***Breaking Stalin’s Nose*** by Eugene Yelchin, A Newbery Honor book

**Lesson 5 (chapters 11-15)**: Sasha enjoys a wild tram ride through Moscow to school. At school Sasha gets in a snowball fight with Vovka Sobakin who teases him, calling him *“Amerikanetz*.” The kids all tease Borka Finkelstein, a Jewish student they call “four eyes.” They pressure Sasha to hit him with a snowball, and call him an “enemy of the people.” Nina Petrovna, a teacher, asks Sasha to recite the laws of the Young Soviet Pioneers, reprimanding Vovka as he joins in repeatedly.

Finkelstein comes in late and Nina Petrovna lets the students “democratically” choose whether to send Finkelstein to the principal. Sasha is chosen to carry the banner in the rally, a big honor. As he waits for the principal’s stamp, Sasha tells Finkelstein that his mother was American, but a true Communist. Finkelstein tells Sasha that his parents are also true Communists, but are in Lubyanka prison. Banner in hand, Sasha daydreams about the rally, imagining himself carrying the banner and meeting Stalin. Then Sasha snaps out of his dream, losing his grip on the banner, and knocking off the nose on a statue of Stalin.

**Vocabulary**

May Day- a Soviet holiday on May 1st, where leaders like Stalin called on all workers to unite against Capitalism. Large parades were held to praise Soviet leadership.

Amerikanetz- the Russian word for an American.

**Interesting fact**: Here is an example of Soviet May Day in 1938. Do you see the Young Soviet Pioneers? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2N1jwT1iWE>

**Discussion Questions:** Print out the following handout for students or discuss as a group.

**Predict:**Sasha accidentally breaks off comrade Stalin’s nose after daydreaming about the Pioneer rally. What will happen to Sasha? Will Sasha get to meet Stalin and become a Pioneer?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Character Activity:** Pick a character besides Sasha (Borka Finkelstein, Vovka Sobakin, Nina Petrovna). What do you know about this person? How is this character’s experience similar and different to Sasha? What do you think will happen to this character later in the book?

**Talk Show Host:** Pretend you are a talk show host from America and are interviewing Sasha about his school. Think of some questions you would like to ask Sasha about his school in the Soviet Union. How are schools in the Soviet Union different from schools in the U.S.?