Based on

**Schooled**
by Gordon Korman

**About the Book:**
Capricorn (Cap) Anderson is a teenager who has been raised on a communal farm by his hippie grandmother, Rain. They are the only two left living in this “commune” environment, so when Rain breaks her hip, Cap (who has been homeschooled) is forced to move in with a social worker and her annoyed teenage daughter and attend the local middle school.

Cap’s wild unkempt hair, tie-dyed shirts, hemp clothes, and handmade sandals cause him to be a moving target at Claverage Middle School (dubbed, C-Average by the students). This causes hot-shot Zach Powers to remind everyone of the tradition of C-Average to elect the biggest nerd in school as class president.

Will Cap become their greatest class president ever or just one big joke?

**Set the Stage:**
Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- What do you think of when you hear the word “hippie”?
- How would you react if you had to share your home with a hippie teenager?
- What is a farm commune?
- What are some things you might miss out on if you were raised solely on a farm commune?

**Review:**
After reading the book, discuss the following:

- What made Cap so different from his classmates?
- What are some things you could learn from Cap?
- Now that you have read this book, have you changed how you might feel if a hippie teenager moved into your home?
- What events caused Sophie to change her attitude toward Cap? What caused Naomi to change?
- How had Cap changed from the day he arrived at C-Average to the day he left? How did things change on the farm for him?
- Cap wrote many bad checks to many causes. What was that all about? Was he a criminal for doing so?
- What are some of the ways Cap was tormented by his classmates and how did he react?
- How did Cap know how to drive a bus? Was his reason for driving the bus justified?
- Why did Hugh Winkleman become Cap’s friend? Was he a real friend?
- What things do you think Principal Kasigi could have done differently to make life better at Claverage Middle School?
Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):
Students will compare their lifestyles to Cap’s, discover commonalities, and appreciate the differences between the two. They will then put themselves in a situation opposite of Cap’s, where they are brought to a farm commune.

Related Activities:
To extend students’ enjoyment of the book, try these:

- **The Beat of a Different Drum:** Cap was raised in an environment that taught nonviolence. There have been many great leaders and thinkers throughout history that have been activists with the same philosophy. Have the students choose one figure to write about. Some examples are: Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Rosa Parks. (A more complete list is available on Wikipedia: List of Nonviolent Leaders and Thinkers.)

  **Consider:** What was their cause? What were the difficulties faced by following their heart? What was the outcome of their actions and how did it affect society?

- **Somewhere in Time:** Some people might look at Cap as a throwback in time or out of touch with the modern world. Have the students imagine themselves as being from the past and attending their present school. Have them write about their reactions to this new environment.

- **Flower Power:** Talk about the 1960s. Discuss the craziness that was on the surface of the turbulence. Now discuss the deeper issues such as the war, racial tension, and grassroots concerns. Use this to remind how important it is to look at the bigger picture for a full understanding. It’s the same for people. Don’t let your first impression determine how you should treat someone.

  Research the 1960’s era as a group and end with a 1960’s day. Have students dress up and include food, music, and games from that era. Have students explain what their favorite movie or TV show is from that time. They can bring in an anecdote from someone from that era.

- **Only in America:** Cap and his grandmother, Rain, were part of an American subculture. They lived within the United States border but lived by a unique set of rules. There are several other examples of this in the United States. Have students break into groups to research these subcultures. When they report back their findings, they can compare the differences and similarities of these people and compare them to their own lifestyles.
Many conflicts are caused by first impressions and misunderstandings. Taking the time to discover why a person is the way he or she is can help us not only understand them, but ourselves as well. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes is one of the best ways to understand an individual.

First, answer the following questions about yourself:

- What do you do for entertainment?

- List five things you like to eat.

- Describe your clothes.

- What's in your room at home?

- How do you get around?

- How do you communicate with your friends?

- How many close friends do you have?

- What trait do you admire in people?

- The one thing that really makes me mad is …

- What is something you do very well?

Now consider Cap's answers to these same questions. Keep in mind that Cap is a non-violent, non-materialistic vegetarian, meaning he doesn’t physically react in anger, eat meat, or have many possessions. Plus, he has been literally cut off from the rest of the world.

**Bonus:** On a separate sheet of paper, write a short scenario that puts you in Cap's world. You are left one day to live on a communal farm because your parents had to go off somewhere for several months. It happened so fast that you were unable to take any of your possessions with you.