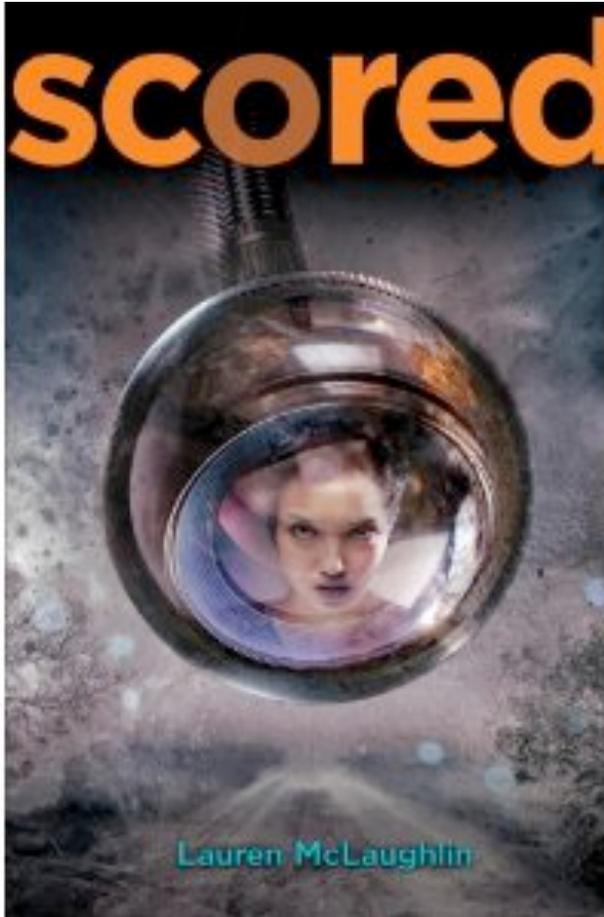# Discussion Guide

Scored
by Lauren McLaughlin

Everyone is a number in this dystopian near-future where surveillance cameras track your every move while a software program scores you on your mental fitness. Score above 90 and you're set for life--a full college scholarship and the career of your dreams. Score below 75 and you're on your own, kid.

With one month to go before her high school graduation, Imani LeMonde is a 92. But her best friend is a 71 and falling fast. And now Diego McLune--brilliant, iconoclastic, and unscored, wants Imani for a study partner. The score-positive choice is clear: think of your future, stick with your score gang, and ditch these losers. But something about being scored doesn't feel right to Imani anymore. ScoreCorp—the giant software company whose intelligent, ever-present cameras watch your every move—says the score is meant to create upward mobility. But who is benefiting in ScoreCorp's brave new world? Is any future worth dumping your best friend? Imani must decide fast—because once the final score is in, there is no looking back.

Questions for Discussion

1. Throughout the novel we learn both positive and negative things about the score. Did you find that you were on a different side of the "score debate" at the beginning of the book than at the end? If so, what changed your mind?

2. Would you feel differently about being scored if it meant the end of standardized testing (SAT, ACT, etc)? What differences and similarities do you see between scoring and standardized testing? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of both programs?

3. Who do you most identify with – the scored or the unscored? If you lived in the world of *Scored*, would you want to be scored or not? Why? If being scored was your only chance to go to college, would that change your mind?

4. If you were to read the story from someone else's perspective— Cady's, Diego's, Miss Wheeler's, or any other character in the book—what aspects do you think would be different? The same?

5. How did your feelings for and opinion of Imani change throughout your reading of her story?

6. What, if any, aspects of Imani's life do you relate to even though her story takes place in an imagined future? How did it feel to have Imani reading about some aspects of life today as "history?"

7. Imani struggles at times with the difference between doing what the score tells her is right and what she feels and believes to be right. She believes that she is doing the right thing and obeying the parameters of the score by giving Miss Wheeler information about Diego and The Chaos Foundation, but she winds up changing her mind. She also believes that it is right for her to continue to be friends with Cady, but then she winds up being punished for it when her score is released. Have you ever been in a similar situation? What did you do?

8. Based on the Five Elements of Fitnesss discussed in *Scored*, (Peer Group, Impulse Control, Congruity, Diligence, and Rapport) what do you think your "core strengths and weaknesses" would be? What would your score be? What would your friends' scores be?

9. What do you think happened to Sherry Potter? Were you as surprised as Imani to discover that one of the inventors of the score had seemingly changed her mind about it right before she disappeared?

10. Who is your favorite character in the book? Least favorite? Why? If you were to cast a movie of *Scored*, who would you cast as Imani? Diego? Miss Wheeler? Cady? Mr. Carol?

11. The score was invented to promote equality of opportunity at a time when the gap between rich and poor had become dangerously large. Can you think of other ways, besides the score, to close such a gap?

12. *Scored* makes reference to the novels *1984* by George Orwell and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. In what ways is the world of *Scored* similar to these other dystopias? In what ways is it different?
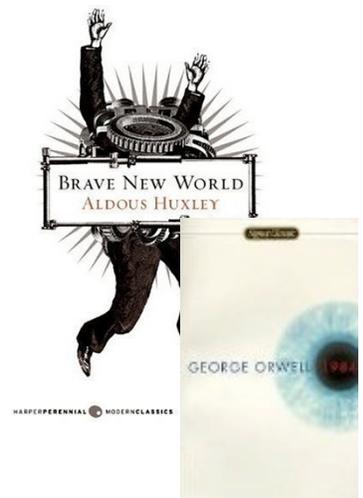
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LAUREN MCLAUGHLIN is a former movie producer who is now devoted to writing novels for teens. Her first novel, *Cycler*, chronicles the adventures of a teenage girl who turns into a boy for four days every month. It is currently in development as a feature film with the producer of the *Transformers* films. She enjoys speaking with readers, teachers, students and anyone who loves books as much as she does. Visit her website, http://www.laurenmclaughlin.net/, or follow her on Twitter, http://twitter.com/#!/LaurenMcWoof. She can be reached by email at me@laurenmclaughlin.net.