

RE-VIEW

Video: Thievin' Theo

Plot

(cliffhanger pattern of action and person-against-self conflict)

Julia, Dean, and Jennifer are contestants on *Name That Plot*, the game show that tests your knowledge of plot. Jennifer advances to the bonus round where she explains how she determined the pattern of action and type of conflict in the story, *Thievin' Theo*.

Now it's **Your Turn!** Read ***Thievin' Theo***. Create your own *Think Aloud*.

Then compare your thinking with **Jennifer's Think Aloud**.



Before You Read:

Think about what you may already know about westerns and rustlers. Think about what you've learned about plot. Remember that authors include action and conflict to make their plots more exciting.

While You Read:

Notice words that can help you determine the action and conflict in the plot. You may want to highlight the action in orange and the conflict in green. (You may use any color available to you – just remember your color scheme!)

After You Read:

- Think about how determining the pattern of action and type of conflict in this story help you to better understand its plot.
- Think about the video you just watched. Jennifer shared how she made sense of the passage *Thievin' Theo*.
- Create your own *Think Aloud*. Share how you made sense of this passage, too.

Thievin' Theo

Thievin' Theo was fresh out of jail for stealing horses, rustling cattle, and picking pockets, having promised the sheriff he'd mended his flea-bit ways.

But on the long walk from jail to home, he spotted something washed up on the shore of Strike-It-Rich River.

It was the body of Carl Coot, the area's most successful gold prospector. Just downstream, Thievin' Theo found a leather pouch chock-full of gold nuggets. He turned the pouch over and noticed the initials "C.C."

"Carl Coot has a wife and kids," he said. But with his heart pounding, Thievin' Theo imagined all the fine horses, cattle, and land he could buy with that gold.

He tucked the pouch in his pocket and faced two trails. One trail led to Carl Coot's ranch, where he could hand over the gold. The other trail took him to town. There, he could cash in the gold, saddle up his dream horse, Galaxy, and gallop off into the sunset.



Thievin' Theo chose a trail and set off running.



Compare Your Think Aloud With Jennifer's Think Aloud:

Jennifer's Think Aloud: I'm predicting from the title "Thievin' Theo" that the main character might be some type of thief. Looking at the first illustration, I can see that Theo looks like a mean cowboy. Because I have read western novels, I'm thinking that the setting might be in the old west during the 1800s. I want to focus on the events to determine the type of conflict and action involved in this story in order to better understand the plot.

To try to figure out the pattern of action, I thought about the series of events in the story or the rising action. The first event happened when Thievin' Theo was on his way home from jail. He found the body of Carl Coot washed up on the shore of Strike-It-Rich River. The next event happened when Thievin' Theo found Carl's leather pouch chock-full of gold nuggets. The third event happened when Thievin' Theo imagined all the fine horses, cattle, and land he could buy with Carl Coot's gold.

The high point of the story came when Theo had to decide whether he would take the trail to Carl Coot's ranch and hand over the gold to Carl's widow and kids, or take the trail to town where he could cash in the gold and keep it for himself. I knew this was a person-against-self conflict because of Theo's internal struggle to choose between right and wrong.

I also know that rising action and the high point of a story occur in both Progressive and Cliffhanger patterns of action, so I had to keep listening to see if the story ended there and left me hanging, or if there was a resolution to the conflict and a conclusion to the story. Knowing the pattern of action and the type of conflict helped me better understand the plot.

When I heard Johnny read, "Thievin' Theo chose a trail, and set off running," I felt like the author left me hanging. I wanted to know which trail Theo chose! So I decided that this had to be a cliffhanger pattern of action.

Thievin' Theo

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Thievin' Theo chose a trail and set off running.

Questions to Think About:

- How does Jennifer use the events of the story to determine the pattern of action?
- How did the high point of the story reveal the type of conflict found in this plot?
- Why might this process help you to understand plot?
- When might this process be useful?