

Thievin' Theo Practice Activities

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.

First, please read the story, "Thievin' Theo."

Next, answer the following questions:

1. What is the pattern of action in the story?
2. What type of conflict occurs in the story?
3. What is the problem presented in the story?
4. Is there a solution to this story?

Finally, decide what you believe Thievin' Theo did with the pouch of gold. Did he keep it for himself, or did he give it back to Carl Coot's family? Discuss your answer with a family member or friend.

Compare your answers with **Jennifer's Think Aloud**.

Before You Read:

Remember, for a story to hold our attention it must have a well-written plot.

Plot is a combination of **Conflict** and **Pattern of Action**.

This story has a "**Person Against Self**" conflict. In a "Person Against Self" conflict the main character as an internal struggle about what to do when making a decision.

This story has a "**Cliffhanger**" pattern of action. A "Cliffhanger" is a story that has no definite resolution to the problem. The ending leaves the reader "hanging."

A Chance to Cheat

Tracy lugged her backpack into her house and dropped it on the kitchen floor. "Mr. Vanderwall gives way too much homework!" she complained. "Tonight I have spelling, social studies, my science fair project, and a book report for a book I haven't even read!"

Tracy's mom poured her a glass of lemonade and gave her a hug. "Weren't you supposed to work on these assignments over the weekend?" Tracy's mom asked.

Tracy groaned. "I had Kate's sleepover, and Alyssa's birthday party."

Tracy's mom pressed. "And you played your new video game, too, right?"

Tracy nodded. "I lost track of time, but now I'm really in trouble."

"Well, have a snack and then get started. I'll be here if you need something," Tracy's mom said.

Tracy walked up the stairs and into the room she shared with her older sister, Meg. "At least I have the room to myself since Meg's at play practice," she thought.

Tracy tackled her spelling and social studies assignments. After supper, she went to the hardware store with her dad for science fair supplies. Using plans she found on the Internet, she made a simple metal detector and a poster to show how it worked.

It was almost 10:00 PM by the time she was done. Rubbing her eyes, she glanced at the book she still needed to read. Then she remembered something.

Meg had Mr. Vanderwall, too, and she read this book. I wonder if she did a book report on it?

Tracy opened Meg's desk and began pulling out folders of old schoolwork and projects. Buried in the bottom of the drawer was Meg's report.

"She got an A on it, too," Tracy whispered.

Tracy bit her lip and stared at the report. "If I copied it in my own handwriting and changed a few words, Mr. Vanderwall would never know it was Meg's."

Tracy held the book in one hand and Meg's report in the other. "I've never cheated before, but the report is due tomorrow. Is it okay just this once?"

Tracy took a deep breath and made her decision, just as she heard Meg running up the stairs.

First, please read the story, "A Chance to Cheat."

Next, answer the following questions:

1. What is the pattern of action in the story?
2. What type of conflict occurs in the story?
3. What is the problem presented in the story?
4. Is there a solution to this story?

Finally, decide what you believe Tracy did at the end of the story. Do you think Tracy read the book or copied Meg's report? Why do you think this? Discuss your answer with a family member or friend.

Compare your answers with **Evan's Think Aloud**.