

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Tina was not in the mood to be helping her mom paint her bedroom. However, her mom told her that if she wanted hot pink bedroom walls, she would have to help. The main problem was that Tina's mom was such a perfectionist that it would take forever! Tina asked if they could split the room in half, with each of them painting two walls. To her surprise, her mom agreed!

Tina didn't waste any time with *her* two walls. Except for a handful of mistakes where her roller of paint hit the ceiling, she was pleased with how nice her two walls of wet paint looked. Her mom, who was just finishing her *first* wall, told her she could go to a movie with her friend as promised.

After the movie, Tina invited her friend to see her new hot pink colored room. When she walked in, she couldn't believe what she saw. In front of her were two walls that looked just as she had imagined they would; those were the two walls her mom had painted. The two walls *she* had painted, though, didn't look so hot. Instead of being a bright solid pink, she saw several areas where she had not used enough paint, so bits of the previous white wall color showed through. Tina couldn't deny the fact that she would have to apply another coat of paint to the walls she had done.

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It was the day after Halloween, and Mason was going through his stash of treats. He was sorting his favorite pieces of candy—the chocolate bars from the duds, like the tootsie rolls. His twin sister, Madeline, entered the room and asked if she could have one of his chocolate bars.

"No way!" he responded. "This candy is all *mine*. Besides, don't you remember when you said you were going to stay home with Mom to hand out candy this year, and how I warned you that I wasn't going to share any of the candy I got with you?"

"Geesh!" Madeline replied. "I just asked for one piece." Then she walked away.

Mason knew what would happen when his mom got home. She would make him share half of his candy — favorites included — with Madeline. He wasn't about to let that happen. He then ate every single one of his favorite chocolate bars. By the end, he didn't feel so good. In fact, within a few hours, he was very sick and found himself regretting his decision.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Kristen's fifth grade class had a well-known group of popular girls. Everyone knew that you were either in the group or not in the group. Every once in a while, the popular girls would invite a classmate from outside their clique to join their group. Kristen and her friend Maria longed to be asked to join the elite group.

One day, as she was walking out of the building after school, a few girls from that group walked up to her, and invited her to hang out with them the next day at recess. Kristen could hardly contain her excitement... until she thought of her friend, Maria. She asked if Maria could join them at recess.

"No, we only want you," one stated matter-of-factly.

"I'm going to have to pass, then," Kristen replied. As the group of girls walked away, she muttered to herself, "I don't want to be part of a group like that, anyway."

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Betsy's mom had gotten her a new outfit for school pictures. Betsy grimaced the first time she saw it; it was hideous. She looked like a kindergartener! However, she also knew that money was tight at home, and her mom was most likely very excited about the surprise purchase for her daughter.

Betsy knew what she had to do. The morning of school pictures, she got up and got dressed. Her mom smiled widely as she walked out of her bedroom wearing the new outfit. Her mom fixed her hair, and Betsy left for school.

When she arrived at school, classmates stared at her. A few snickered. Some made sarcastic comments about her stepping out of a kindergarten classroom. Betsy just kept thinking of her mom's huge, proud smile earlier that morning.

When she saw her best friend, Becca, she explained the situation. "Well I am proud of you, Betsy. What you did today took a lot of guts!"

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Peter really liked Gene, the older gentleman that lived next door. Every morning on his way to school, he would wave and say hi to Gene, who would be sitting out on his front porch. Even on cold or snowy mornings, there Gene would be, standing in his window, waiting for Peter to come out the front door. Peter always waved as he walked along the sidewalk in front of Gene's house. Peter had become so used to their little routine that he was surprised one winter morning when Gene was not in the window for their daily greeting. The remainder of the day didn't seem right. It just felt like something was missing.

On his walk home from school, he decided to stop at Gene's house to make sure he was okay. Peter knocked on the door and waited. Finally, the door opened. Peter was relieved to see Gene. Gene explained that he had fallen that morning in the bathroom, and was okay, but very sore. That was the reason he hadn't made it to the window that day.

That night, three inches of snow fell. Peter woke up early, got dressed in his winter gear, and went to the garage to get a snow shovel. He went to Gene's driveway and started scooping the snow. He glanced at Gene's window and saw Gene standing there smiling.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



The first time Justin saw the bike, he knew he wanted it. It had blinking lights all along the wheel spokes. They were solar-activated lights, so when he rode it to school during the day, the lights would get their charge. He had visions of riding it in the evening, and being admired by all the other kids in the neighborhood as his wheels glowed and blinked as he rode past them. *I know*, he reasoned to himself, *my parents will tell me that I already have a bike that gets me around fine, but that's a hand-me-down from my older brother, Chris, and I deserve something new every once in a while. I can convince them.*

He took a moment to look at the price tag. The bike's price was \$500. He gulped. It might take some work to convince his parents at *that* price. On his way home from the store, he thought of arguments that might persuade them to buy the bike for him. By the time he arrived home, he felt confident that he would be successful.

He walked in the door, and heard his parents talking. They were worrying together about how they were going to cover the cost of the unbudgeted car repair. Justin quietly stepped back outside climbed on his old, hand-me-down bike, and rode down the street. *It may not be fancy*, he thought to himself, *but it gets me around fine.*

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Sam and Kate were worried about people in their town who didn't have enough food to eat. They decided to do something about it. They asked their friends to help them. Twenty kids would come together to make thirty frozen egg casseroles. They were going to take them to the Food Bank in town, and the Food Bank would distribute them. Two grocery stores had donated the food they needed. The Community Center said they could use their large kitchen to make the egg casseroles.

On Saturday morning in January, Sam, Kate, and their friends met at the Community Center. Kids grabbed a recipe card and started making an egg casserole. Kids had to wait on one another to gather the ingredients they needed. Kids bumped into each other as they worked on their own casserole.

"Hey, everyone," Kate said, "let's try setting up an assembly line."

Everyone agreed that was a great idea. It took a few minutes to get organized. However, once they got started, it was much more efficient! Before long, all thirty egg casseroles were assembled and ready to be delivered to the Food Bank!

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Meredith was so excited. It was her birthday, and her grandma had just arrived with her gift. Her grandma had taken her shopping a week ago to get some gift ideas, and she had picked out a new outfit that she was already excited to wear.

"I hope you're not disappointed with what I got you, Meredith," her grandma said as she gave her the present, "but when I went back to get the outfit you picked out, there were none left in your size."

Meredith tried to hide the wave of disappointment that hit her. She unwrapped the gift, and opened the box to reveal an outfit that was not at all her style.

"Thank you, Grandma!" she said enthusiastically.

Her grandma smiled widely, assuming Meredith's thank you meant she loved the gift. "Oh, I'm so glad you like it!" she said. "You'll see I have a gift receipt in there in case it doesn't fit."

Meredith nodded and glanced at her mom. She could tell that her mom approved of the way she handled the situation.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Jada couldn't believe what had just happened. They were on their way home from dance practice, and she saw her dad do it. His mobile phone buzzed, indicating he had just received a text. He had picked it up to read the message, and then started texting as he was driving. What happened next was terrifying. The driver in front of them suddenly hit the brakes, and Jada's dad didn't notice. Jada screamed. Her dad swerved to miss the car in the nick of time, but now they were in the ditch.

Her dad turned to her in the back seat. "Jada, are you okay?"

Jada sat there trembling. "I think so," she said.

"I am so sorry. I can't believe I put your life at risk like that," her dad replied. "I promise here and now that I will *never* pick up my phone while I am driving again!"

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Matt and Jeff looked at the map their cross-country coach had just handed out. For practice that day, they were to run a three-mile route to the town library and then back to the school. They set off to run the route with their teammates. The runners began to spread out, but Matt and Jeff continued to run side by side, discussing how they could shorten the route. They agreed on a shortcut that would save them several blocks. They ended up getting back to the school just after the fastest runners on the team, and no one realized they didn't run the entire route. They started doing this every practice.

Soon it was time for their first meet. There were people along the entire course, so there was no way that they could cut the route at the meet. About halfway through the race, Matt and Jeff began to tire. Soon after that, they slowed their pace considerably. They finished the race, but were the last two members of their team to cross the finish line. Their coach was shocked, since they were usually among the first runners to return to school during practice.

Matt and Jeff didn't like being the last on their team to cross the finish line. From that day on, Matt and Jeff always ran the entire route during cross country practice.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Josie was upset with herself. When she started the test, she was nervous that everything she had studied would slip from her mind.

Therefore, she had only skimmed the directions. Because she did not read the directions thoroughly, she missed the fact that there was a second step to be completed for every question. When Mr. Baxter returned the test, Josie was shocked to see that she had earned a failing grade on it. She answered every single question correctly, but had simply failed to do the second task! This was the first time she had ever failed a test. Before Josie knew it, she was in tears.

Josie's teacher pulled her into the hall to console her. "Josie, don't beat yourself up about this. It's good that you care, but you need to remember that it's just one test. You're not going to fail the class because of your grade on this one test. Besides, I figure everyone has a bad day every now and then, so I always drop each student's lowest score when figuring grades."

Josie brightened a bit. "Well, I guess I should be glad it happened in your class then. This will make me read the directions carefully from now on."

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Trevor's dad tapped his shoulder. "This is the *last* time I am telling you. The bus will be here in ten minutes. If you miss it and I have to drive you to school, you lose computer privileges for one week."

Trevor had been hitting the snooze button on his alarm clock for the last 30 minutes. He had it all figured out, though. When his dad came in with his regular "final warning", he would get up, get dressed, brush his teeth, and grab a granola bar on his way out the door.

Everything was going as planned ... until he got to the door and his backpack was not there. He looked everywhere for it, scrambling more and more with each passing minute. Then he heard the dreaded sound – the bus was coming up the street.

The bus came and went with Trevor still looking for his backpack. As soon as it rumbled down his street, Trevor found his backpack.

Trevor looked at his dad, who shrugged as if to say *This is your own fault, you know.*

What is the theme of the narrative below?



No one enjoyed hanging out with John. No matter what anyone said or did, John always had a story or a claim to outdo everyone else's. Not only did it get very annoying, but more than once, he was caught in a lie!

One Friday, John's parents said he could invite one friend to spend the night. He asked Ryan. He asked Jeremy. He asked Juan. To his surprise, everyone had an excuse for why they could not accept his invitation. His teacher, Mr. Turner, overheard some of these conversations. He knew what the problem was. He pulled John aside, and explained what he was seeing and hearing. Mr. Turner then asked John a number of questions that helped him understand why everyone was declining his invitation.

From then on, John made a serious effort to simply nod his head when someone else was sharing an accomplishment or story. Before long, John's classmates began to think of him as a friend.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Ryan's parents had purchased a desk for his bedroom. It had come unassembled in a big, flat box. Ryan's dad said that Ryan was old enough to assemble it himself. His dad would be there to help tighten screws and things like that, but Ryan would be responsible for the basics of putting it together.

Ryan pulled the contents out of the box. He picked up the directions for assembly, but quickly threw the aside. It was too wordy, and besides, Ryan knew he could figure it out on his own. If he got stuck, *then* he would look at the directions.

About 20 minutes into it, he was about halfway done. He looked at the remaining pieces of wood and realized that something wasn't adding up. There were more pieces of wood left than there should have been. Ryan pulled out the directions. His dad silently pointed to step one. He had not made the base section of the bookcase. Unfortunately, Ryan knew what he would have to do now. Yes, he would have to take it all apart and start over.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Corina always had to be the center of attention. If she looked out her window and saw two girls in the neighborhood playing, she would stomp out there and demand to know why they hadn't knocked on *her* door to ask *her* to play as well. At dance class, if she felt someone was better than her, she would be mean to them and point it out whenever they made a small mistake. At school, she made others move so she could sit in the middle of the table at lunch.

One day, her classmate, Julie, couldn't take it anymore. "I'm sorry, Corina, but sometimes you are just mean. Don't you see that no one wants to hang around with people that always have to be in the spotlight? When you're not the center of attention, you can be really mean. The rest of us are getting tired of being treated like this."

Corina was speechless. She narrowed her eyes at Julie, looked at her friends as if to say *Come with me*, and stomped off. No one followed her.

What is the theme of the narrative below?



Dawn hated the sport of wrestling. She didn't even want to watch it. It made her feel claustrophobic when she saw a wrestler being pinned, face smothered against the ground, unable to move.

Her dad and older brother, however, felt very differently. They loved the sport. Her dad was even a volunteer coach at the high school, and her brother wrestled at youth tournaments nearly every weekend.

"You know I hate wrestling, Dad, and I refuse to go to another one of Nate's dumb tournaments. In fact, I don't even think it should be a real sport. After all, it's really just a bunch of guys fighting."

Dawn's dad looked like he'd been punched in the stomach. "I'm sorry you feel that way, Dawn. I'm not saying that you have to like the sport, but I would hope that you would at least appreciate that wrestlers are athletes who work very hard to meet their goals. It's not just a bunch of guys fighting. Besides that, you should want to support your brother. It is something he enjoys."

Dawn looked down, ashamed that she had hurt her dad's feelings. She could not deny that he was right.

THEME TASK CARDS

Name _____

Directions: Select the letter that most accurately represents the theme of the narrative on each numbered task card. Write that letter in the cupcake's theme filling.

1. a. Splitting the room in half can be a good way to tackle a painting job.
b. It's better to do things right the first time.
c. If you have a good suggestion, adults will agree with it.
d. Painting a room can be a time-consuming task.



2. a. Eating too much candy can make you sick.
b. Think things through when deciding between two activities.
c. Selfishness can have negative consequences.
d. Don't expect others to give you something just because you made a bad choice.



3. a. There are more important things in life than being popular.
b. Popularity will make you inconsiderate of others' feelings.
c. Cliques shouldn't be allowed.
d. Friends can sometimes let one another down.



4. a. Wear the clothes your parents choose for school pictures.
b. Stand by your friends no matter what.
c. Don't worry about what others think of you.
d. Stand up for yourself.



5. a. Help others in their time of need.
b. Be a good neighbor.
c. Check with older neighbors regularly to make sure they are in good health.
d. Be careful when doing things when you get old.



6. a. Kids should not ask for things their parents cannot afford.
b. Appreciate what you have.
c. Kids should save their own money if they want something.
d. Kids shouldn't interrupt parents when they are talking privately.



7. a. Be kind to everyone.
b. When people work together, more can be accomplished.
c. Helping others makes people feel good.
d. Laziness can have negative consequences.



8. a. When you receive a gift you don't like, you should lie and say you like it.
b. When asked for gift ideas, always give more than one idea.
c. It's important to be gracious when someone does something for you.



9. a. Be an alert passenger when others are driving.
b. Don't text and drive when traffic is heavy.
c. Reckless behavior can hurt you and others.
d. When you make a mistake, admit it.



10. a. Cheating can have negative consequences.
b. Follow directions given by a coach.
c. Cross-country is a difficult sport for some kids.
d. Don't let others influence you into making bad choices.



11. a. Crying is a sign of weakness.
b. Mistakes are okay as long as you learn from them.
c. A failing grade is not worth crying over.
d. It's important to console others when they are upset.



12. a. It's important to get up as soon as your alarm goes off.
b. Be organized.
c. Don't make choices that put you at risk of losing privileges.
d. Procrastination can have negative consequences.



13. a. Bragging is not a trait that will attract friends.
b. Don't put up with braggers.
c. Be kind to everyone, even if they brag too much.
d. Listen to advice from adults.



14. a. When putting something together, always have two people, one to read the directions, and one to do the work.
b. Develop a plan before starting a project.
c. Completing a project accurately is more important than getting it done quickly.
d. Purchase things that are already assembled whenever possible.



15. a. Stand up to people who always have to be the center of attention.
b. Self-centered behavior can lead to avoidance from others.
c. Be kind to everyone, even if they are not kind to you.
d. When standing up to someone, stay focused on their bad behaviors.



16. a. Be tolerant to others and their views, even if you don't agree.
b. Always agree with your parents.
c. Don't keep your feelings bottled inside too long without saying something.
d. It's important to be honest.

