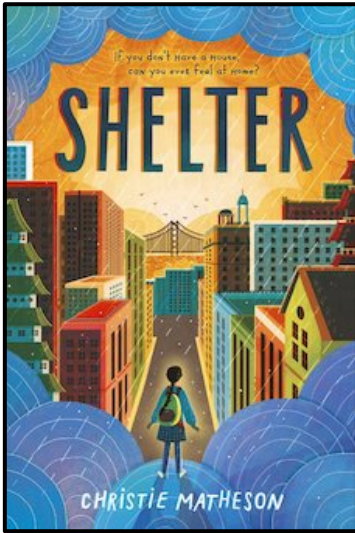


Homelessness in Children's Literature: Life Defining Decisions



E.D. Decision-Making Grid

1. Define the Problem.

2. List the Alternatives.

3. Identify the Criteria.

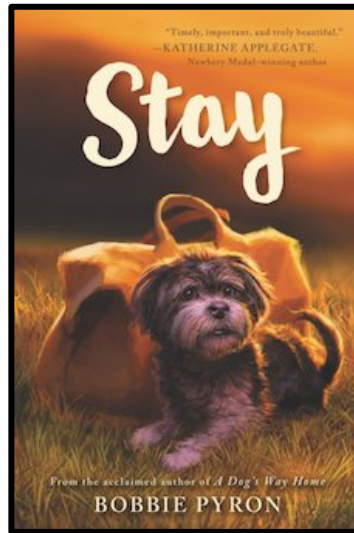
4. Evaluate the Choices.

5. Make a Decision.

Directions:
Fill in each square with +3 if the answer to the alternative is yes, +1 if the answer is no, and 0 if it is neutral.

What is the problem?

Criteria	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Alternative 1		
Alternative 2		



Decision Making Tree

Decision: _____

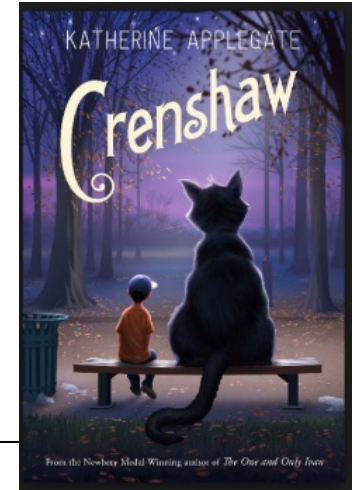
Benefits: _____

Costs: _____

Alternative 1: _____

Alternative 2: _____

Problem: _____



Cost-Benefit Analysis

In *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, a twelve-year-old boy finds himself in a life-changing situation. Should he remain in the only home he has ever known now that he has discovered that along with sameness and safety comes heartlessness? Or should he dare to find the unknown community of Elsewhere? And if he leaves, should he take the baby, Gabriel, with him? What should he do? Help him decide by filling in this chart with some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two possible alternatives (choices).

	Alternative 1 Stay in the Sameness Community	Alternative 2 Leave to find Elsewhere
Benefits Advantages or Good Points	⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗	⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗
Costs Disadvantages or Bad Points	⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗	⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗

October 27, 2022

Lauren H. Shifflett
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National Standards



CONTENT STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: SCARCITY..... 2

Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

STANDARD 2: DECISION MAKING..... 5

Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. Many choices involve doing a little more or a little less of something: few choices are “all or nothing” decisions.

<https://www.councilforeconed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/voluntary-national-content-standards-2010.pdf>

VIRGINIA HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Skills K.1 –C/E .1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by h) using a decision-making model to make informed decisions

K.9 The student will a) recognize that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want; and b) explain that people work to earn money to buy the things they want.

1.8 The student will explain that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want.

1.9 The student will recognize that people save money for the future to purchase goods and services.

2.9 The student will distinguish between the use of barter and the use of money in the exchange for goods and services.

2.10 The student will explain that scarcity (limited resources) requires people to make choices about producing and consuming goods and services.

3.10 The student will identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).

CE.11 The student will apply social science skills to understand how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by a) explaining that because of scarcity, consumers, producers, and governments must make choices, understanding that everyone's choice has an opportunity cost

CE.14 The student will apply social science skills to understand personal finance and career opportunities by-c) identifying human capital such as abilities, skills, and education and the changing supply of and demand for them in the economy

In this webinar attendees will:

- **Examine** homelessness as it relates to children and children's literature.
- **Explore** children's chapter books and identify the economic concepts related to homelessness situations found in them.
- **Learn** how to use book content to teach age- appropriate lessons and activities based on choices and decision-making.
- **Share** a bibliography listing related book titles.
- **Review and Discuss** issues dealing with homelessness.

Homelessness is not easily defined. Some considerations concerning this situation include:

- Homelessness can occur when housing is unaffordable, unsafe, overcrowded, or unsuitable, and when there is a lack the support necessary to maintain stability.
- A form of homelessness occurs when people live in temporary accommodations such as bunking with family or friends or staying in a hotel.
- Absolute homelessness happens when people are staying in emergency shelters or sleeping in places not intended for permanent shelter such as in cars or under bridges.

Research shows that the impact of experiencing homelessness on children includes the negative consequences:

- Poor health
- Inadequate nutrition
- Deficient hygiene
- Low self-esteem;
- Hesitancy to form relationships with peers
- Difficulty trusting people
- Short attention span
- Aggressive behavior

Importantly, being unhoused presents significant barriers to school success.

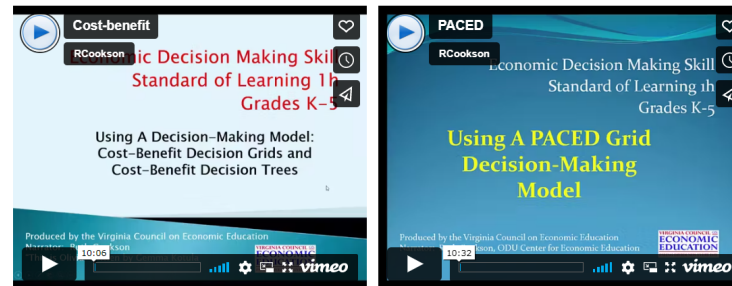
Homelessness by the Numbers

- 29% of homeless families are headed by a working adult, usually the mother.
- More than half of homeless mothers do not have a high school diploma.
- The number of homeless children in America is estimated at 2.5 million.
- Homeless children experience four times as many respiratory infections, twice as many ear infections and are four times more likely go have asthma.
- Homeless people have an average life expectancy of just 50 years.



THREE BASIC DECISION MODELS

- 1. Cost-Benefit Decision Model:** To decide whether or not to do something—when the choice is “yes” or “no”
- 2. Cost-Benefit Decision Tree:** To help decide between two choices. In essence, it combines two Cost-Benefit models
- 3. PACED Decision Model:** Used when there are various options/alternatives but also certain things/criteria that are important to you. **P**roblem; **A**lternatives; **C**riteria; **E**valuate; and **D**ecision

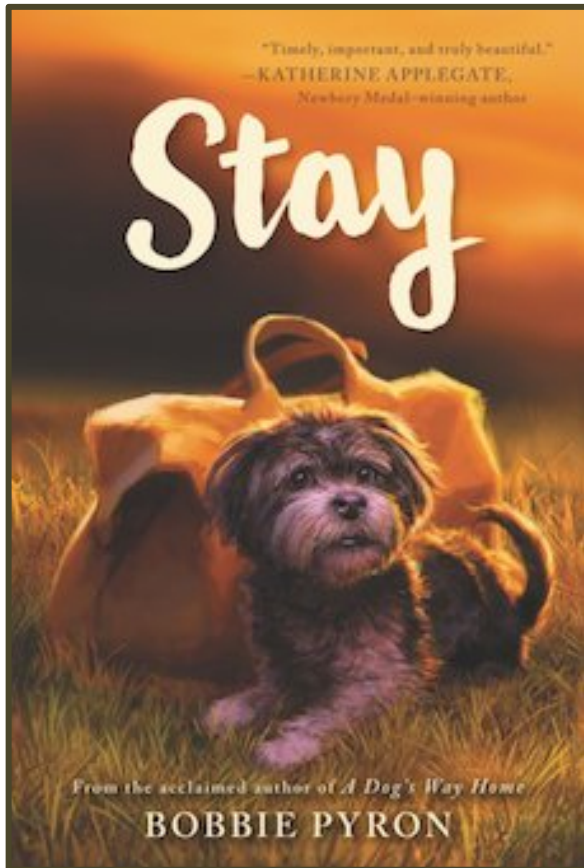


<https://vcee.org/economic-decision-making/>

Life Defining Decisions



1. Stop 
2. Think 
How will this affect myself or others?
3. Make a good choice! 



Story Synopsis: When 11-year-old Piper and her family move into a homeless shelter, she misses her former life. She discovers new friends at Hope House, including a street dog named Baby. Soon Piper finds she must protect Baby from being taken away for good when his person goes missing.

Publisher: HarperCollins


Copyright Date: 2020

Reading Level: 4.1

Interest Level: 4-7

Stay Lesson Plan

Stay
written by Bobbie Pyron



Book Synopsis: When 11-year-old Piper and her family move into a homeless shelter, she misses her former life. She discovers how it feels to be homeless. Includes a insert about Jewel Knight, a dog named Baby who is owned by Jewel Knight. Soon Piper finds she must protect Baby from being taken away for good when his person goes missing.

Lesson
Baby Makes a Decision

Introduction: Baby is confused. He has been told by his person to "stay" when she is taken to the hospital after becoming ill. Baby is very smart and acts beyond his age, but should he listen to Jewel Knight? It is winter and cold outside. Will he allow his best friend to be taken away for good when his person goes missing?

Time: 20-25 minutes
Grade Level: 3-5

Materials:

- Visual: Cost/Benefit Decision Grid
- Extension Activity Sheet: Cost/Benefit Decision Grid
- Writing Tools
- Document Camera
- Copies of Stay by Bobbie Pyron

Students will:

- Use decision-making skills to determine the benefits of their opinions.
- Develop skills using the ability to make wise choices.

Procedure:

1. Prepare and collect materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson asking the students if they have heard how loyal certain dogs can be. Show the students the cover of the book *Stay* by Bobbie Pyron. Explain that one of the characters in the book is a small, loyal dog named Baby.
3. Explain that all decisions have costs and benefits.
4. Define **benefit** as something that satisfies your wants. A benefit is the positive effect of a decision.
5. Define **cost** as what you give up when you decide to do something. A cost is the negative effect of a decision.
6. Inform the students that they will be helping a dog make a decision concerning a command made by his homeless owner who is living outdoors with him in a community park. She tells him to "stay" when she is taken to the hospital in an ambulance.
7. Display the visual. Read the problem to the students: *Should the Dog named Baby stay in the park and wait for his person, Jewel Knight, to return?*
8. Solicit suggestions from the students concerning the costs and benefits of Baby staying in the park and wait Jewel Knight to return. Fill in grid. Accept all reasonable suggestions. Possible Student Suggestions: **Benefits:** Jewel would find him when she got out of the hospital. The street people would see that he got food. He could stay and guard Jewel's bag which she left behind. He was familiar with the location. **Costs:** He might not get food to eat. He could get caught and sent to an animal shelter. Jewel may not return. **Decision:** Baby should stay in the park because that is where his person will find him. It would be better for Baby to leave the park and look for Jewel, she might be lonely and need him.
9. Ask the students to use the information they have suggested on the Cost/Benefit Decision Grid to help them decide if Baby should stay in the park. Take a class vote and record the most popular choice in the Decision box.
10. Conclude the lesson by reminding the students that all choices have costs and benefits. Often, we will make better decisions if we stop and think about our costs and benefits before we choose what to do.

Extension Activity:
Challenge the students to create their own Cost/Benefit Decision Grid. Distribute the activity sheet and write Grid based on another groups.) Encourage students including their final decision into the hospital.

Extension Activity Sheet-

Cost-Benefit Decision Grid


Problem: _____

Benefits <i>A benefit is what satisfies your wants</i>	Costs <i>A cost is what you give up when you decide to do something</i>
☺	☹
☺	☹
☺	☹
☺	☹
☺	☹

Decision: _____

Visual

Baby Makes a Choice



Cost-Benefit Decision Grid

Problem: Should the dog named Baby stay in the park and wait for his person, Jewel Knight, to return?

☺ Benefits of staying in the park <i>A benefit is what satisfies your wants</i>	☹ Costs of staying in the park <i>A cost is what you give up when you decide to do something</i>
☺	☹
☺	☹
☺	☹
☺	☹

Decision: _____



Publisher: Square Fish
Copyright Date: 2017
Reading Level: 3.8
Interest Level: 5-9

Story Synopsis: Nine-year-old Jackson Wade and his family are facing some very real problems; hunger, parental illness, joblessness, unpaid bills, and possible homelessness. When Jackson was five, he and his family were forced to live in their car due to their financial circumstances. Not wanting to repeat this experience, he finds himself assuming the role of an adult and is shouldering major stress. It's no wonder an imaginary friend from childhood shows up to help him cope with the seriousness of his family's situation.







HOMELESSNESS

What is homelessness?

Homelessness is the condition of people who live without a regular dwelling. People who are homeless do not have regular, safe, secure and adequate housing, or lack a "fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence."



Some Reasons People Lose Their Homes

-  There is an unplanned major expense
-  There is a natural disaster and the family has no insurance.
-  The "bread winner" loses a job
-  The car breaks down and it's not possible to get to work
-  Rent goes up
-  There is a major illness in the family

Homelessness in Children's Literature

Visual 2-

The Wade Family's Income & Expenses

In the book *Crenshaw*, Jackson Wade is concerned about the choices his parents are making concerning how they manage their money. If he would have taken advantage of the stacks of bills and receipts that were left on the kitchen counter, he would have discovered the information below. Note: Jackson would have recorded the information in a notebook, rounding up the numbers to make the math easier.

Wade Family Monthly Income & Benefits:

Dad's Social Security Disability Payment	\$2,380.00
Mom's substitute teacher income	2,000.00
SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)	940.00

TOTAL: \$5,320.00

Wade Family Monthly Expenses:

Rent	\$1190.00
Food (Grocery Store)	\$940.00
Paper Goods & Cleaning supplies	200.00
Dog Food & Medication	180.00
Eating Out & Pizza Delivery	320.00
Gas for Van	290.00
Insurance for Van	200.00
Internet & Phone	130.00
Electricity & Water	260.00

TOTAL: \$3,710.00

Activity Sheet

Crenshaw Problem Solving

Jackson does not want his family to get evicted from their apartment because they aren't able to pay the rent. He is very worried and *Crenshaw*, a human-sized imaginary cat appears to give Jackson good advice. The most important advice that he gives Jackson is to tell the truth. Can you think of some advice *Crenshaw* would share with Jackson concerning the following situations?

1. Jackson's sister, Robin, is growing fast and needs new shoes. How can she get a pair without spending lots of money?
2. Even though Jackson is nine-years old, he would like to earn some money to help his family. What are some jobs he could do?
3. Are there places to live other than a car if the Wade family has to leave their apartment? If so, what are they?
4. How can the Wade family celebrate Robin's birthday in a fun way without spending too much money?

Bonus: Can you think of any other advice *Crenshaw* could give Jackson to help him and his family?



CRENSHAW By Katherine Applegate/ISBN-13:9781250091666

GIGI WOLF, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF KANSAS CITY

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

This lesson will introduce students to challenges faced by those who live in poverty due to homelessness, unemployment and/or low-income jobs. Students will read the book *Crenshaw* about a boy who creates an imaginary friend to help him deal with difficult experiences in his life. Students will learn about social services available in the U.S. and apply this to a small group budgeting activity. Students will also complete a cost/benefit analysis using a problem that Jackson and his family faced and demonstrate their understanding of key vocabulary through a writing exercise.

GRADE LEVEL: 4-6

CONCEPTS:

Choice, opportunity cost, spend, save, scarcity, income, budget, social services, unemployed, poverty, costs/benefits

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the opportunity cost of choices
 2. Interpret data within charts and graphs
 3. Apply spending and saving principles
 4. Develop a budget plan using scarce resources
 5. Analyze the costs and benefits of choices
 6. Summarize their comprehension of key vocabulary in writing
-

TIME REQUIRED:

60-minute class period



CRENSHAW By Katherine Applegate/ISBN-13:9781250091666

GIGI WOLF, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF KANSAS CITY

HANDOUT 3: COSTS, BENEFITS AND CRENSHAW

Instructions: Write at least two costs and two benefits for each option in the spaces provided. Then answer the questions at the bottom.

Option 1: Borrow Money	
Costs:	Benefits:
•	•
•	•

Option 2: Live with Parents	
Costs:	Benefits:
•	•
•	•

Option 3: Live with Others (cousin or friend)	
Costs:	Benefits:
•	•
•	•

Which of the three options would be your first choice? _____

Which of the three would be your second choice? _____

Which of the three would be your third choice? _____

Which option is your opportunity cost? _____

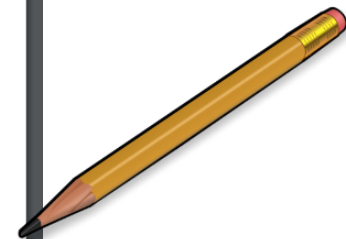
Use the back of this handout to write a description of how Crenshaw helped Jackson get through a very difficult time in his life. Your description should include five or more sentences and at least three of the vocabulary terms below.

Benefits
Budget
Choice
Costs

Income
Opportunity cost
Poverty
Save

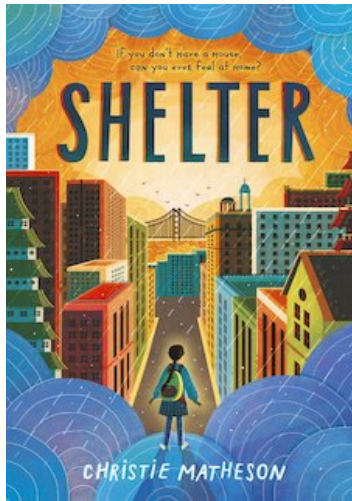
Scarcity
Social services
Spend
Unemployed

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Shelter

by Christie Matheson



Publisher: Random House

Copyright Date: 2021

Reading Level: 4.7

Interest Level: 4-7

Story Synopsis: Maya, a fifth grader at a distinguished private school, is having a tough time after tragedy strikes her family. Her father is in the hospital, her mother can no longer work, their landlord sold their house and they can no longer afford to pay rent. Deciding to keep these changes from her friends is taking its toll. As if living in a shelter with her mom and younger sister weren't challenging enough, dealing with dangerous environments, food insecurity, lack of privacy, and school bullies make her life difficult to navigate.

Making Choices

What Would You Take?



I reach in farther and feel for my worn-out copy of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, one of my favorite books, and Gilbert, the little stuffed dog I've had since I was a baby.

When we left our house, we couldn't take much with us. We had to be able to carry it all. So I fit what I could into this backpack and one other bag. We can leave our stuff in our room at the shelter, but I always like to have my favorite things with me. Just in case.

15






FOR USE WITH COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO Crenshaw

BY KATHERINE APPLIGATE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine Applegate is the author of the bestselling *Animorphs* series, and the novels *Home of the Brave* and *The One and Only Ivan*, winner of the 2013 Newbery Medal. She lives with her husband, author Michael Grant, and their two children in Northern California.



ABOUT THE BOOK

In her first novel since winning the Newbery Medal, Applegate tells a magical story about family, friendship, and resilience. Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times—food, either. His parents, his little sister, and the dog, Crenshaw, are all struggling. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he helps him. But is an imaginary friend enough?

Beloved author Katherine Applegate proves in this new novel that an imaginary friend can be real.

TO ATTAIN SPECIFIC COMMON CORE GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS AND STUDENTS, TEACHERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ADAPT THIS GUIDE TO THEIR CLASSES' NEEDS. YOU MAY COPY AND PASTE THIS CONTENT.



THE POWER OF MUSIC

Jackson and Robin's parents are both musicians, and music is very important to them; in fact, they named their children after the companies that made their guitars. They especially like the music of guitarist B. B. King and singer Aretha Franklin. Listen to recordings of both of these performers in class, and have students discuss in a group how the music makes them feel, and why they think these performers were so important to the parents.

CCSS: RL.4.1; SL.4.4; SL.4.5

KEEPSAKES

Jackson and Robin have to choose special possessions to put in their "keepsake bags" before the family has a yard sale. Have each student make a list of things that were most important to the children in the story and state why they believe each object was special? Then have each student make a list of the things he or she would put in a keepsake bag at home or at school and explain why these things are special.

CCSS: RL.4.3; W.4.2

THE POWER OF STORY

Read to the class the two books that Jackson and Robin put in their "keepsake bags": *A Hole Is To Dig* by Ruth Krauss and *The House on East 88th Street* by Bernard Weber. Discuss the importance of each of these books to Jackson and Robin and why they would want to keep them. Why does Jackson have his book in the keepsake bag even though he says he has outgrown it? How do the themes in each of these books relate to the personalities of each of the children? Write a paragraph about your favorite book or books and why those stories are meaningful to you.

CCSS: RL.4.1; RL.4.3; W.4.1

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

Crenshaw is a name that Jackson makes up. Everyone in his family is named for someone, or something, else. Have the students discuss the importance of a name. Why is it important for Jackson to give Crenshaw a completely made-up name that isn't related to anything else in his life? Ask students to think about how the names of people in their family are connected. Have them either write a paragraph on the origin of their own name or on a name they would make up for a pet or an imaginary friend.

CCSS: RL.4.3; RL.4.4; W.4.3

About the Author of this Guide

Discussion Guide prepared by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant and Editor of the 8th, 9th, and 10th Books of Junior Book of Authors and Illustrators (H. W. Wilson/Salem Press).

FOR A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS USED IN THIS GUIDE, PLEASE VISIT WWW.CORESTANDARDS.ORG.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Jackson's statement: "Stories are lies, when you get right down to it. And I don't like being lied to." (p. 9) Why doesn't Jackson like made-up stories? Why is it so important for him to have a logical explanation for everything that happens?
2. When are the times in Jackson's life that Crenshaw appears? Which events occur that create a need for Jackson to have Crenshaw in his life? Discuss Jackson's comment about the name Crenshaw: "It felt like a blank piece of paper before you drew on it." (p. 27)
3. Why does Jackson feel different from the other members of his family? Describe scenes in the story where Jackson feels separate from them. Identify times in the story when Jackson realizes how important his family is to him.
4. Compare Crenshaw and Aretha in the way they behave. Can Aretha see Crenshaw the way Jackson can? Does she sense whenever he is around, or does Jackson imagine that she does?
5. What is the difference between Jackson's reaction to Crenshaw when he appears the first time and when he appears now? Why does Jackson keep telling him to leave? What is he afraid of when Crenshaw is close? What does Crenshaw mean when he says, "Imaginary friends don't come of their own volition. We are invited." (p. 76)
6. When did Crenshaw go away in Jackson's life earlier? Why has he never told Marisol about Crenshaw and about his family's problems? Why does he tell her now?
7. Discuss the theme of friendship in this book. How did Jackson and Marisol become friends? What are the experiences and beliefs that they have in common? What are their differences? How does their friendship help each of them?
8. Why does Jackson read the dog calendar? How does he feel about the few times that he has stolen from a store? Why does he feel worse about lying than stealing? What makes him ask Crenshaw, "Are you my conscience?" (p. 196)
9. Discuss the theme of magic in this story. What is the meaning of "magic" in the context of Jackson's life? Why did he want to reveal how the magician's tricks worked at school? Discuss Marisol's comment: "Just enjoy the magic while you can, okay?" (p. 160)
10. Jackson sometimes feels as if he is the most grown-up member of his family. Identify times in the story when he does appear to act more grown-up than his parents. Identify places in the story when his parents are in charge of the situation.

CCSS: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3

ACTIVITIES

THE POWER OF WORDS

Jackson wants to grow up to be a scientist. He enjoys learning new facts and using exact words for every observation. Some of the words you notice that in the book may be unfamiliar. Have students use a dictionary to discover the meanings of these words:

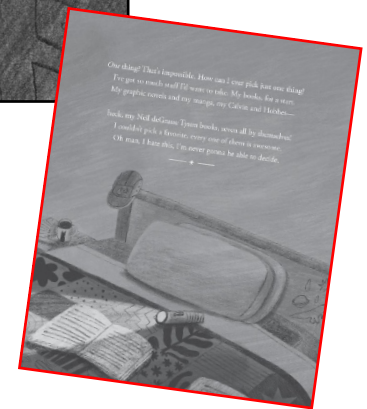
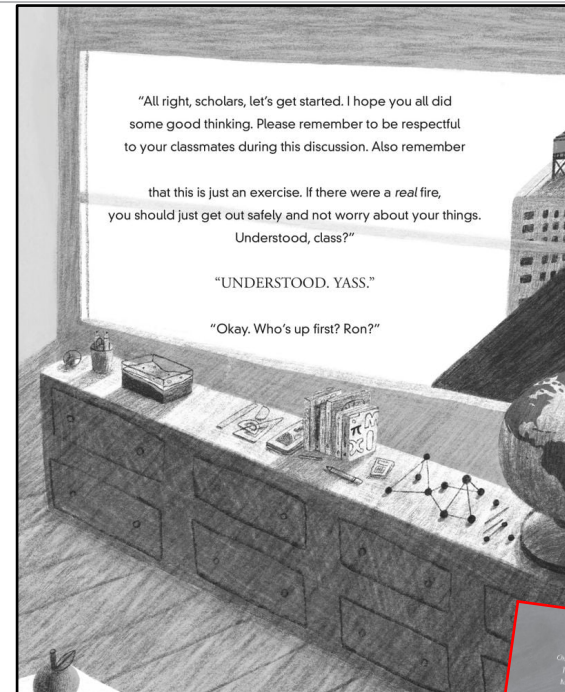
curmudgeon keepsake volution optimism pessimist obscure
 volution gravity paleontologist conscience porous abstract

Assign different students to use one of these words in a sentence and explain its meaning to the rest of the class.

CCSS: RL.4.4



macmillan mackids.com
children's publishing group

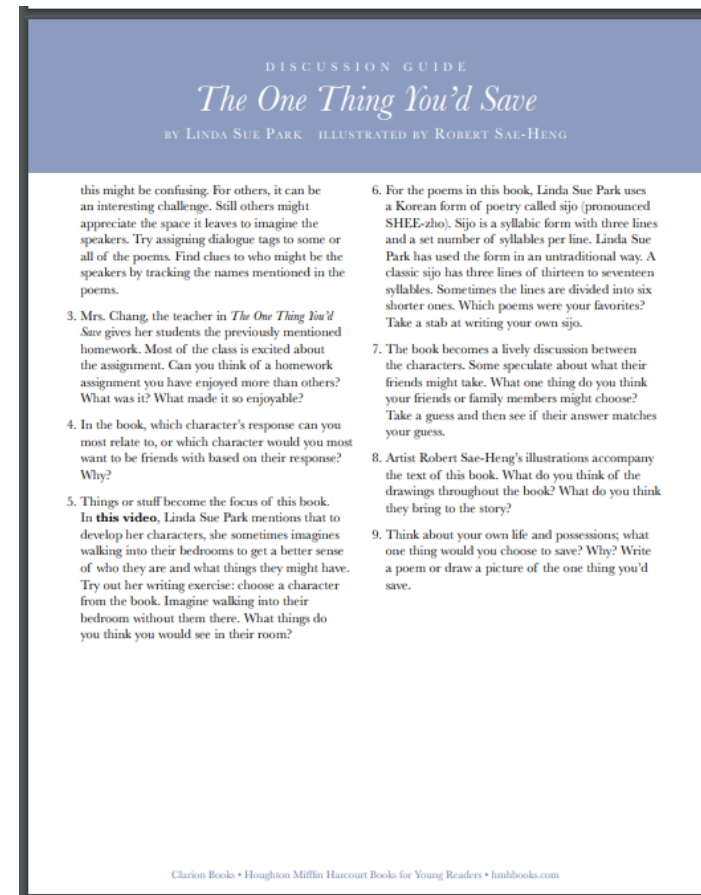
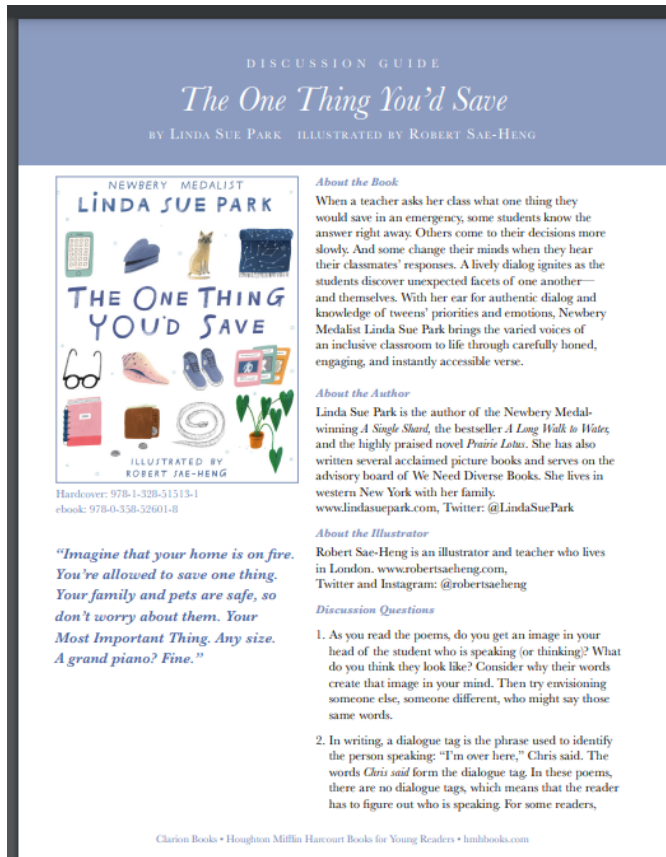


Challenge your students with this picture book!

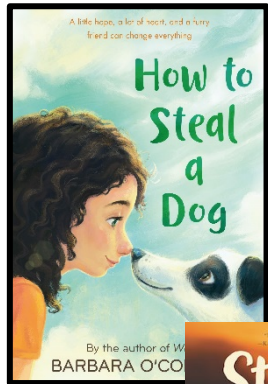


The assignment: pick a single object to save in an emergency. Each student has an answer. For one, it's a photograph. For another, it's his trading cards—no, his whole bookcase. Wait! Is that even allowed? Students talk, argue, stand by their choices, and change their minds as they discover unexpected facets of one another—and of themselves. With insight and humor, Linda Sue Park captures the voices of an inclusive classroom in verse inspired by the Korean poetry form sijo.

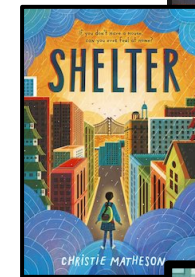
<https://media.btsb.com/TitleLessonPlans/3988.pdf>



Children's Chapter Books Featuring Homelessness



Title	Author	Copyright & Publisher	E/PF Concepts	Grade Level
<i>Crenshaw</i>	Applegate, Katherine	2015 – Feiwel & Friends	Spending, Debt, Homelessness	5-8
<i>From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler</i>	Konigsburg, E.L.	1967- Aladdin	Choices, Budgeting, Opportunity Cost	4-7
<i>How to Steal a Dog</i>	O'Connor, Barbara	2007 -Farrar, Straus & Giroux	Entrepreneurship (ill-gotten gains), Choice, Scarcity	4-7
<i>Maniac Magee</i>	Spinelli, Jerry	1990- Little Brown & Co.	Scarcity, Poverty, Choices, Racism	5-9
<i>No Fixed Address</i>	Nielsen, Susin	2018 - Random House	Poverty, Choices, Food Scarcity, Jobs, Human Capital, Money Note: Set in Canada	5-9
<i>Shelter</i>	Matheson, Christie	2021 – Random House	Scarcity, Choices, Human Capital, Saving, Opportunity Cost Insurance, Employment, Renting vs. Home Ownership, Government Agencies	4-7
<i>Stay</i>	Pyron, Bobbie	2020- HarperCollins	Scarcity, Choices, Human Capital, Saving, Opportunity Cost Social Services, Documentation, Insurance, Fund Raising	4-7
<i>Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave</i>	White, Jen	2015- Scholastic	Choices, Opportunity Cost, Money, Scarcity (Parent Abandonment)	5-8
<i>Watchdog</i>	McIntosh, Will	2019- Random House	Post-apocalyptic social and economic failures	4-7



For Discussion

- Do children's books about homeless help students? If so, how?
- Have you noticed that people are experiencing poverty or homelessness in your community?
- Do you have resources or privileges that make it easier to live above the poverty line?
- What community resources, such as a thrift store or food pantry, are available to support people to meet basic needs? How do these resources help the community as a whole?



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