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Study Guide

for

Shiloh

by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Meet Phyllis Reynolds Naylor



The marvelous thing about writing is that I may play the part of so many different people—an old grandmother on one page, a young boy the next; a middle-aged man or a girl of fifteen.

—Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor was born in 1933 in Anderson, Indiana. She was the middle child in her family of two girls and a boy. She writes of one of the family's favorite activities, reading books together:

Some of the best nights were the ones when my father did the reading. He could imitate all kinds of voices—the runaway Jim's in Huckleberry Finn, Injun Joe's in Tom Sawyer, and Marley's ghost in A Christmas Carol.

In elementary school, Naylor was writing her own stories. Her love of writing was well known in her school, and she was sometimes asked to compose poems for special occasions. At home she wrote and illustrated mystery, adventure, and fantasy stories for herself and her family.

When Naylor was sixteen, a Sunday school teacher who knew how much Phyllis loved to write stories asked her to write for a church newspaper. Naylor's first story, about a young baseball player, was published in the

newspaper. Several weeks later, she received a check for \$4.67—the first money that she earned as a writer.

As a teenager, Naylor continued writing. She published other pieces, including a humorous column in the church newspaper. During summers, the family visited grandparents in Iowa and in Maryland. Both locations would later appear as settings in Naylor's books.

In 1951, when she was eighteen, Phyllis Reynolds married and moved to Chicago. Five years later, her husband became mentally ill and had to be hospitalized. After eight years of treatment, he did not recover, and the couple divorced. The experience of living with a mentally ill person is described in her novel *The Keeper* (1986). She later married Rex Naylor, a speech pathologist. They have two children and live in Bethesda, Maryland, outside Washington, D.C.

Naylor is known for the great variety of her books. She has written for both adults and children. Her children's books are set in widely different locations—West Virginia, Florida, Iowa, and Maryland. She has written about a range of subjects, including the loss of religious faith (*A String of Chances*), the supernatural (her series of *Witch and York* books), divorce (*The Solomon System*), and the death of a parent (*The Dark of the Tunnel*).

Not all of Naylor's novels focus on serious topics. A school contest to conserve natural resources is the setting for *Beetles, Lightly Toasted*. In this comic novel, Naylor mixes insects, imaginative recipes, and hungry students. Some of her books, like *Shiloh* and its two sequels (*Shiloh Season* and *Saving Shiloh*), are both serious and funny.

Naylor has written more than eighty books. In an interview, she explained:

My biggest problem is that there are always four or five books waiting in the wings. Scarcely am I halfway through one book than another begins to intrude.

Introducing the Novel

. . . I'm thinking how nothing is as simple as you guess.

—*Shiloh*, chapter 15

Looking back on their childhoods, some people remember the time that they realized their world was far more complex than they had believed. For eleven-year-old Marty Preston, the hero of *Shiloh*, that moment comes when a thin, obviously mistreated beagle dog follows him home. From his parents, Marty has learned to tell the truth, be kind to animals, respect other people, and always try to do the right thing. When he realizes, however, that he must deceive others in order to protect the dog he calls Shiloh, Marty is unsure about what to do.

Author Phyllis Reynolds Naylor says that writing fiction begins with asking “what if” questions. In *Shiloh* the “what if” questions include these: What if being kind to animals means that one must keep secrets from one’s family and neighbors? What if respecting another person’s rights and property conflicts with doing what one believes is right? What happens when honesty and kindness clash? How can a young person choose among rules that seem to be in conflict?

Another question raised in the novel is what can be done about the abuse of animals. Naylor has no simple answer for her characters or for the readers. Marty wants to act at once when he first learns how Judd Travers treats his defenseless dog. Marty’s father reminds him that the dog is legally another person’s property.

Naylor had a real dog in mind as she wrote *Shiloh*:

I actually found such a dog in West Virginia, in the little community of Shiloh. That dog so haunted me that long after we came home, I knew I had to write about her.

The real Shiloh was adopted by some friends of the author. Named Clover, the dog frequently went on school visits to meet students who had read *Shiloh*. If you read the dedication page to the novel, you will find that *Shiloh* is dedicated to Clover. Naylor has written two more books about the shy beagle who changed so many lives. *Shiloh Season* and *Saving Shiloh* complete the **trilogy**, or series of three books.

THE TIME AND PLACE

Shiloh takes place in a rural community in West Virginia. The towns of Sistersville, Friendly, and Middlebourne that are mentioned in the story are real places. On a road map or in an atlas, you can locate the towns about halfway between the cities of Wheeling and Parkersburg, along the Ohio River in Tyler County.

Shiloh is set in the region of the United States known as Appalachia, named for the Appalachian Mountains. The Appalachian system stretches from Quebec to Alabama and includes the White, Green, Allegheny, Blue Ridge, Cumberland, and Great Smoky Mountains.

For much of its history, the Appalachian region was poor. Its geography made transportation difficult, and its farms were usually small. Beginning in the 1900s, the timber and mineral wealth of the region attracted lumber and mining companies. The scars of careless timbering and mining practices still remain. Today, many Appalachian people leave their homes to find work in industrial cities outside the region.

For the pioneers who settled in Appalachia, living in the isolated mountains created a sense of independence and self-reliance. It also created a unique culture. Today’s bluegrass music and some forms of country music are based on Appalachian folk music, which in turn can be traced back to the first Scottish, Irish,

and English settlers in the mountains. The square dance also originated in Appalachia. Today, the region hosts numerous storytelling

festivals and craftspeople whose wood carvings, woven baskets, and pottery are much admired by collectors.

Did You Know?

The Appalachian Trail, one of the most famous hiking trails in North America, stretches 2,100 miles (3,400 kilometers) from Maine to Georgia, passing through fourteen states. Every year more than three million people visit some part of the Appalachian Trail to hike, bird watch, or photograph wildlife and wildflowers. Each year at least 1,600 hikers start out to walk the entire trail from beginning to end, but only about 300 actually succeed. Those who do succeed must walk an average of 14–25 miles a day and devote at least six

months to the journey. Most carry packs weighing thirty to fifty pounds as they wind through forests and face the challenges of steep climbs and bad weather. Registers posted along the trail allow hikers to exchange messages and information with other hikers about their journeys.

The headquarters of the Appalachian Trail is in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. West Virginia is Marty Preston's home state. You can learn more about the Appalachian Trail by visiting its Web site at www.nps.gov/aptr.

Before You Read

Shiloh Chapters 1–5

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you had a problem that challenged your sense of fair play or honesty.

Journal

Write in your journal about a time when you had to make a difficult decision. What did you do first? Did you make a plan? What challenges did you have to overcome? What strengths did you need to solve the problem?

Setting a Purpose

Read to discover how Marty Preston searches for a solution to an ethical problem.

BACKGROUND

Coming-of-Age Novel

Some book reviewers consider *Shiloh* an example of a coming-of-age novel. In a **coming-of-age novel**, the author describes how a character passes from childhood to adolescence or adulthood. In these novels, the characters have experiences that help them determine who they are and what they are capable of. Some coming-of-age novels are about journeys, geographical or spiritual. Marty does not make an actual journey, but his taking responsibility, making decisions, and weighing complicated questions of right and wrong all move him along in his development from childhood to adulthood.

Did You Know?

Even though the beagle can be traced to third-century Britain and fifth-century Greece, the breed first became popular in the 1300s and 1400s, when famous British monarchs—Edward II, Henry VII, and Elizabeth I—chose beagles as their hunting hounds. The breed's popularity spread to France, Greece, and Italy; but by the 1700s, sportsmen hunters preferred the foxhound over the beagle. However, farmers in England, Ireland, and Wales continued to keep packs of beagles for hunting. In 1876 beagles were imported into the United States. They were recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1884.

Beagles are small dogs (weighing from eighteen to thirty pounds) and are popular as both pets and hunters. Typically, the beagle has a black, white, and tan coat. The beagle is solid, energetic, independent, attentive, and sociable. Its stubborn nature can make it more difficult to train than other breeds. Because the beagle is a scent hound and used to tracking prey, its essential function is to hunt, primarily rabbits.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

abandoned [ə bən' dænd] *adj.* deserted, empty

commence [kə mens'] *v.* to begin

grovel [gruv' əl] *v.* to creep face down

jowls [jəʊls] *n.* cheeks

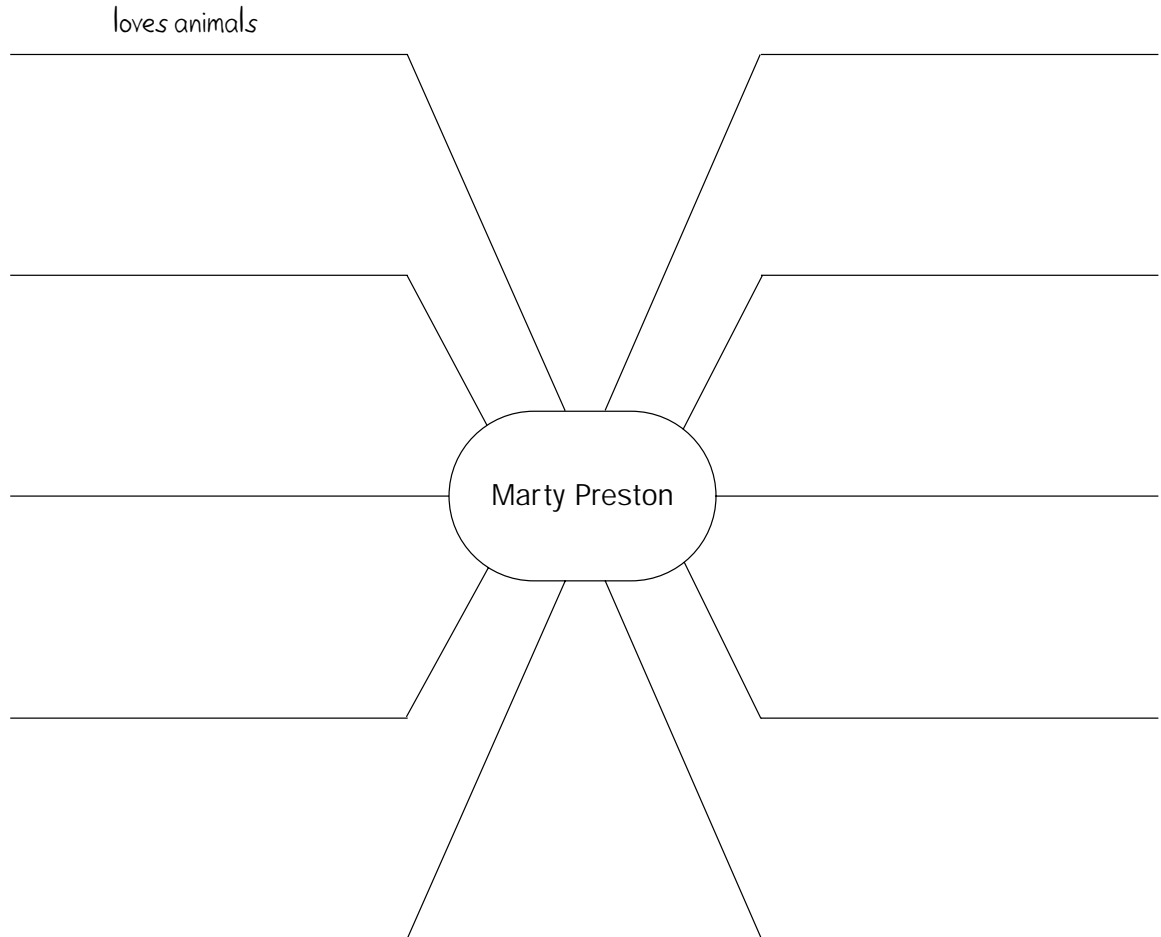
sickle [sɪk' əl] *n.* tool with crescent-shaped blade for cutting grass and weeds

ticks [tɪks] *n.* bloodsucking insects that attach themselves to animals

Active Reading

Shiloh Chapters 1–5

What kind of person is Marty Preston? You can learn about his personal qualities from what he says and thinks, from what he does, and from what other characters say about him. Use the web diagram on this page to record Marty's personal qualities—both positive and negative—as you learn about them in these chapters. Identify the qualities and write any comments you may have about them on the lines connected to the circle.



Responding

Shiloh Chapters 1–5

Personal Response

Recall a time when you wanted something that seemed impossible to have. What would you say to Marty to help him deal with his disappointment?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What is Marty's attitude toward animals? How do you know this?

2. Why can Marty not have a dog? What evidence can you find in the novel that getting a pet would not be a wise decision for the Prestons?

3. How does Marty answer when Judd and Mr. Preston ask whether he has seen the missing dog? In your opinion, were Marty's answers truthful? Explain your answer.

Responding

Shiloh Chapters 1–5

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Many novels are told in the past tense. Marty, the narrator in *Shiloh*, uses the present tense, telling things as they happen to him. Why do you think the author uses the present tense? How does it affect what the narrator knows?
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5. In chapter 3, Marty explains why he has never asked to be paid for doing household chores. Reread this section. Do you agree or disagree with his conclusions about being paid for household chores? Give reasons to support your position.
-

Literature and Writing

Changing the Point of View

Point of view is the relationship of the narrator, or storyteller, to the events of the story. The narrator in *Shiloh* is Marty, a character in the story. He uses the words *I*, *me*, and *we* as he tells the story from the **first-person point of view**. The reader learns what Marty thinks and feels about events. We have no way of knowing what other characters are thinking unless they tell Marty. The story would be told differently if another character were the narrator. Choose an episode in the first section and retell it from the point of view of another character. For example, you might retell the episode at the end of chapter 5 from the first-person point of view of Judd or Mr. Preston, or the opening scene in chapter 1 from the first-person point of view of the dog.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In chapter 2, Marty explains why he doesn't like Judd Travers. Describing the incident in which Judd cheated the storekeeper, Marty says, "around here, folks keep to their own business." Remember that "keep to" or "mind one's own business" is a colloquialism for not interfering in others' affairs. In your group, discuss under what conditions you think people in a community should "mind their own business." Under what conditions should people take an interest in others' lives? With members of your group, develop some pros and cons regarding minding your own business.

Learning for Life

In the **Focus Activity**, you wrote about solving problems. In chapter 5, Marty describes how he tries to solve his problems with Shiloh. Imagine that you have been asked to evaluate Marty's way of solving problems and make suggestions to him. Write a short report on how Marty approaches his problems, and then make three suggestions.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Shiloh Chapters 6–10

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you think there is a difference between a lie and a fib? Why or why not?

Discuss

Think of an example—from real life or from something you have read or seen—of how telling a lie led a person deeper and deeper into trouble. Describe the situation to a partner and discuss ways the person might have avoided the trouble without telling the lie.

Setting a Purpose

Read to discover how lying complicates Marty's life.

BACKGROUND

Conflicts

Most stories contain a **conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces. In a novel, the conflict involves the main character. The conflict may be external or internal. An **external conflict** pits the main character against an outside force. This outside force may be another character, nature, society, or even fate. An **internal conflict** takes place in the main character's mind. A character may have both internal and external conflicts.

As you read *Shiloh*, look for external and internal conflicts. Try to identify the opposing forces. For example, what forces are opposing Marty in his struggle to help the dog? What internal force makes him feel uncomfortable about telling lies to his family and to others?

Did You Know?

A **dialect** is a regional variety of language distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from other regional varieties of the language. Authors often write dialogue in the dialect of the region in which the novel is set. Marty and his family speak the Appalachian dialect of West Virginia. As you read, notice how the characters' spoken words and Marty's thoughts differ from standard English. For example, the characters often leave out the subject of the sentence. In chapter 6, Marty's mother says, "Eleven's a moody age. Was for me anyways." She leaves out the subject in the second sentence, *It*. At other times, the characters express themselves with words and phrases generally understood in their region but perhaps not familiar to outsiders. These differences in speech make the story seem more realistic.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

frankfurter [frangk'fər tər] *n.* hot dog

welts [welts] *n.* raised wounds

yowls [yowls] *n.* howls

Active Reading

Shiloh Chapters 6–10

In this section of *Shiloh*, the lies Marty tells begin to catch up with him. In chapter 6, he says, “Funny how one lie leads to another, and before you know it, your whole life can be a lie.” As you read this section, use the chart on this page to keep track of the lies Marty tells, the circumstances in which he tells them, and the results.

Lie	Circumstance	Result
He didn't eat Dara Lynn's chocolate rabbit.	Ma asks him because Dara Lynn is upset.	Marty feels bad, then tells the truth; he has to apologize to Dara Lynn.

Responding

Shiloh Chapters 6–10

Personal Response

When Marty’s mother discovers Marty and Shiloh in their hiding place, she says, “Don’t you ever run away from a problem.” Explain whether you think this is good advice.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Where does Marty stop on the way home from visiting David? What does he do? What happens later in the novel because of what he did?

2. How does Marty’s mother figure out that Marty is hiding something? What is her reaction when she finds Shiloh and learns that Marty has not been telling the truth?

3. What agreement does Marty make with his dad about Shiloh? Why do you think his father makes this agreement?

Responding

Shiloh Chapters 6–10

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. When Marty hitches a ride into town with Judd Travers, Naylor gives the reader some clues about Judd’s background. What are these clues? Do you think they help explain Judd’s personality? Why or why not?

5. In your opinion, why does Marty love Shiloh so much? What is Marty learning from taking care of a pet?

Literature and Writing

Sharing a Problem

After his mother finds out about Shiloh, Marty feels glad that someone knows his secret. He is relieved that he doesn’t have to tell lies anymore. However, he has only one day to figure out how to save Shiloh. Marty says that he has thought until his “brains are dry.” On a separate sheet of paper, recount in your own words some of the plans that Marty has thought of in the past week as well as the emotions and fears he has experienced. Then, imagine that Marty has asked you what he should do. Finish your summary of Marty’s plans with a few suggestions of your own on what he should do next.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

After taking Shiloh to Doc Murphy, Marty’s dad says, “The law says a man that pays money for a dog owns that dog. You don’t agree with the law, then you work to change it.” Reread this passage. In your group, talk about what Marty’s dad means. Then make a short list of real or fictional persons, who have worked to change laws with which they disagreed. Discuss the following questions:

- What actions did the persons take to change the law?
- How did other people feel about the actions?
- Did the people who opposed the law suffer hardships?

Learning for Life

What makes a family strong enough to endure hardships? Working with a partner, list characteristics of strong families. Then, examine the novel to see how well the Prestons match your list.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Shiloh Chapters 11–15

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you had to deal with a person who seemed to dislike other people. How did you handle the situation?

Chart It

On a separate sheet of paper, list five suggestions for dealing with a person who is difficult to get along with. Think of techniques you have used as well as ones you have read or heard about.

Write your most important suggestion first.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Marty tries to deal with an especially difficult person.

BACKGROUND

Plot Elements

The **plot** of a novel is the sequence, or series, of events in the novel. Usually, one event leads to the next one. A plot contains several different elements. In the first, the **exposition**, the author introduces the main characters, the setting, and the situation and gives us the background information we need to understand the story. Next comes the **narrative hook**, the point where the conflict begins and the reader is drawn into the story. In *Shiloh*, the narrative hook is Marty's decision to keep the beagle. The sequence of events that follow the narrative hook and contribute to the conflict is called the **rising action**. The rising action leads to the **climax**, the point of greatest tension in the story. The **falling action** is the sequence of events that occur after the climax and lead to the **resolution**, or final outcome. As you read the final section of *Shiloh*, try to identify the plot elements named here.

Did You Know?

Each year, the Newbery Medal is awarded to the most distinguished children's book of the year. The award is named after John Newbery, an Englishman of the 1700s who was one of the first publishers of books written especially for young people. The medal was first given in 1922. Today, a committee of the American Library Association chooses the winner. The winning books may display a picture of the gold medal on their covers. The first book to win the Newbery Medal was *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem Van Loon. Since 1922 many outstanding books have received the medal. Some of them are *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes; *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare; *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle; *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor; and *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan. In 1992 the winner of the Newbery Medal was *Shiloh*. You can find a list of all the Newbery Medal and Honor books on the Internet at www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

antibiotics [an'tē bī ot'iks] *n.* infection-fighting drugs

omission [ō mish'ən] *n.* something neglected or left undone

turpentine [tur'pən tīn'] *n.* a solvent derived from the sap of pine trees and used as a paint thinner and a cleaning fluid

warble [wôr'bəl] *v.* to sing in a trilling manner or with many turns and variations

Active Reading

Shiloh Chapters 11–15

In the final chapters of *Shiloh*, Marty makes several important decisions. Each of these decisions has consequences. As you read, keep a record of the decisions that Marty makes, the reason for which he makes each, and the consequences of each.

Marty's Decision	Why He Makes the Decision	Consequences of the Decision
Marty tells David about Shiloh.	David saw the pen.	Marty worries because many people know about Shiloh; he is sorry that he has to ask David to lie.

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Responding

Shiloh Chapters 11–15

Personal Response

What does courage mean to you? Do you feel that Marty showed courage in this section of the novel? Explain.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What is the family's attitude toward Shiloh after he is brought to the house? What actions described in the text are clues to their attitude?

2. Marty says, "I begin to see now I'm no better than Judd Travers—willing to look the other way to get something I want." What event causes Marty to say this? How does Marty's realization about himself affect his attitude toward Judd and about issues of right and wrong?

3. What steps does Marty take to try to understand Judd? In your opinion, why does he make this attempt?

Responding

Shiloh Chapters 11–15

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. At the end of the novel, the author shows a different side of Judd Travers. How would you describe this other side? Did you find that your opinion of him had changed? How believable did you think Naylor’s portrayal of him was? Explain your answer.

5. In chapter 15, when the family learns it will be able to keep Shiloh, Marty’s father says, “[T]here’s food for the body and food for the spirit. And Shiloh sure enough feeds our spirit.” What do you think he means by this comment? Give other examples of things that offer food for the spirit?

Literature and Writing

A New Marty?

By the time the novel ends, Marty has changed in his attitudes toward himself and others. Write a summary of how Marty has changed. To focus your summary, you may want to discuss these questions:

- What lessons does Marty learn?
- What new beliefs and values has he developed?
- How has his understanding of himself and of other people changed?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

At the end of the novel, Marty thinks to himself, “Nothing is as simple as you guess—not right or wrong, not Judd Travers, not even me or this dog I got here.” In your group, examine what Marty means in the context of the story.

Listening and Speaking

In chapter 13 of *Shiloh*, Marty thinks about animal abuse and hunting. Marty considers reporting Judd to county officials for abusing his dogs and for shooting a deer out of hunting season. Marty wonders how a person could shoot an animal like a deer even in deer season. He decides that hunting might be necessary to feed one’s family. With a partner, write rules governing animal protection and hunting seasons that you feel would be fair to both pet owners and hunters. Read your rules to other partners and ask for their comments.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Responding

Shiloh

Personal Response

At the end of the novel, Marty and Judd Travers have “learned to get along,” in Marty’s words. What do you predict for their future? Do you think they might become real friends? Explain your answer.

Writing About the Novel

Shiloh is a novel about making choices—some good, some bad. All of the choices that Marty makes have consequences. Analyze some of Marty’s choices. You may want to review the **Active Reading** on page 21. Discuss the situation that led to each choice, the way Marty made the decision, and the consequences of the decision for himself and others. Include evidence from the text to support your analysis.



Save your work for your portfolio.

The Christmas Fake

Lois Lenski

Before You Read

Focus Question

What values might help a family withstand serious economic difficulties?

Background

Lois Lenski (1893–1974) was an award-winning writer of books for young people. Among her best-known works are a number of novels about children, set in different regions of the country. One of these, *Strawberry Girl*, won the Newbery Medal in 1946. *Lois Lenski's Christmas Stories*, from which this reading is taken, is a collection of short stories.

Responding to the Reading

1. What is the family's financial situation? What details from the story tell you this?

2. Why is Letty so negative about Christmas? What things happen to change her feelings?

3. Letty tells Mike that Santa Claus is a big Christmas fake. How does the meaning of the word *fake* change by the end of the story?

4. **Making Connections** Compare the Ridley family in "The Christmas Fake" with the Preston family in *Shiloh*. Name some values that the families share. What strengths does each family possess that help it survive tough times?

Creative Writing

Write a poem or a short essay about a holiday experience that you remember especially well. Think about the feelings you shared with others. Consider how the holiday experience affected you and what you learned from it.

from *Stride Toward Freedom*

Martin Luther King Jr.

Before You Read

Focus Question

What do you think is the most effective way to oppose injustice?

Background

In 1955 a young Baptist minister led a boycott of the city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating. With the help of many others, Martin Luther King Jr. was able to end segregation on the buses. This was one of the first of King's civil rights campaigns, all aimed at gaining equal rights for all Americans. King, a strong believer in nonviolence, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968.

Responding to the Reading

1. What was the reaction of the white riders when the African Americans rode the buses? How did some of the reactions encourage King?

2. Why, do you think, did Martin Luther King Jr. feel responsible for the violence that surrounded the campaign to integrate the buses in Montgomery? What incident in the reading shows his feelings of responsibility?

3. At what point in the reading do you feel that King showed the greatest personal courage? Why?

4. In your opinion, why did some people oppose equal rights for all citizens?

5. **Making Connections** Martin Luther King Jr. and Marty Preston both stood up against injustice. Compare and contrast the courage exhibited by each of them. What, in your opinion, was the source of their strength?

Learning for Life

Think of a situation in your own life or a matter currently in the local or national news that, in your opinion, involves an injustice. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph explaining your reasons for believing that an injustice exists. Write as if your paragraph were going to be published as an editorial in your local newspaper.

What Ever Became of Honest Abe?

Ezra Bowen

Before You Read

Focus Question

Imagine that a friend of yours has found a wallet containing credit cards and two hundred dollars. What advice would you give to your friend?

Background

Ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. In this selection, a *Time* magazine writer describes an ethical problem that arose in several cities when bags of money fell out of armored cars on the way to the bank. The writer examines why the people behaved in the way they did and what their behavior means to modern society.

Responding to the Reading

1. According to Melvin Kiser, who returned \$57,000 that fell from an armored truck, how did the reactions of his parents differ? What might explain the difference between Kiser's mother's and father's feelings about his return of the money?

2. Bowen calls Kiser a "throwback." Bowen is implying that honesty is old-fashioned and out-of-date. Do you agree? Why or why not?

3. Why might some people believe that it is worse to steal from an individual than from an institution? Explain.

4. **Making Connections** After reading *Shiloh*, what do you think Marty Preston would have done if he had seen money fall out of an armored car? Support your answer with evidence from the novel.

Performing

Working in a small group, role-play a daytime TV talk-show conversation between Melvin Kiser and Marty Preston on the subject of honesty. The students role-playing the guests should give examples from the novel *Shiloh* or from the *Time* article. Choose a host to interview Marty and Melvin. Have a studio audience ask questions and comment on the answers.

Stray

Cynthia Rylant

Before You Read

Focus Question

If you found a stray dog, cat, or other pet, would you want to keep it? Why or why not? How would you go about convincing your family that you would be a responsible pet owner?

Background

Cynthia Rylant is the author of numerous books for young people. Many of her stories are set in Appalachia and deal with young people who are meeting the challenges of growing up. Like Marty in *Shiloh*, the main character in this short story forms a loving bond with a dog.

Responding to the Reading

1. What is the parents' attitude toward the dog at the beginning of the story? Does this attitude change by the end? Explain.

2. What did Mr. Lacey finally do with the dog? What do you learn about him from his actions?

3. In what ways might the stray dog make Doris's life different?

4. **Making Connections** Compare Amos and Mamie Lacey, the parents in "Stray," with Marty Preston's mother and father in *Shiloh*. What characteristics do they share? How are they different? Support your answer with details from the texts.

Internet Connection

Using *animal protection* as your keyword, search the Internet for sites related to the protection of animals. The site of the Humane Society of the United States is at www.hsus.org. Use the information you find to prepare a Web guide to animal protection issues. Share your guide with the class. Use the space below to make notes on the sites you discover.

The Bell of Atri

retold by Sharon Creeden

Before You Read

Focus Question

If a person has done a good deed for you, do you feel that you owe that person something in return? Would you feel the same way toward an animal that performed a service?

Background

This Italian folktale has been retold many times. Sharon Creeden's version is followed by comments about anticruelty laws, animal protection societies, and animal rights issues.

Responding to the Reading

1. What service has the horse performed for the knight? What does the knight promise the horse in return for his task?

2. Do you believe that a person's caring about animals necessarily means the person cares less about human beings? Explain your answer.

3. **Making Connections** The horse in the tale is denied shelter and food by the knight, just as the beagle Shiloh is denied certain things in the novel. Make a list of three rights you believe that Shiloh should have had but that were denied by Judd Travers.

Literature Groups

With a partner, write a story about an animal in folktale style. Emphasize the loyalty and service of the animal. Practice telling the story. Later, have a storytelling festival in class.