Toys or Treasures?
Our ordinary possessions can gain unexpected value

About the Article

Levels
Lexile Level: 810L
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives
Students will read two texts about precious items and synthesize ideas about what makes something valuable.

Content-Area Connections
Social studies: economics

Key Skills
Synthesizing, vocabulary, compare and contrast, text evidence, cause and effect, evaluating arguments, key details, inference, drawing conclusions, narrative writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.9, W.3, SL.1, L.6
For more standards information, see our website.

Your Teaching Support Package
Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at storyworks.scholastic.com:

Audio:
• On-level version • Lower-Lexile version

Differentiated article:
• Lower-Lexile version (printable)

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
• Core Skills Workout: Analyzing Two Texts: Synthesizing, Summarizing,* Text Evidence,* Inference*
• Comprehension Quiz*
• Questions for English Language Learners

*Available on two levels
• What might make a regular toy become more valuable over time? (cause and effect) A toy might become more valuable if not many of them were made. If a toy is rare, collectors might pay more to own one of the few that exist.

• Reread the last two paragraphs of the article. What are some reasons people collect toys (and other items)? Which of those might be reasons you would collect something? (evaluating arguments) Reasons for collecting an object include wanting to be connected to history; hoping to eventually make money; feeling inspired by the object; enjoying the “hunt”; or being reminded of a special time. Answers will vary.

“My Priceless Treasure” Close-Reading Questions
• What are some words and phrases the author, Lauren Tarshis, uses to help you understand what her grandmother Jennie was like? (key details) The author starts with a string of adjectives, including “bright-smiling,” “hug-giving,” and “tsunami-of-love,” that show her grandmother was full of warmth and made Lauren feel loved. Near the end of the essay, she describes her grandmother’s “huge smile” and says “her eyes would light up when she saw me.”

• How did Lauren feel about the gold necklace when she was growing up? (key details) The necklace was very precious to her. She was sure that her solid-gold heart was worth a lot of money, and she wore it on special occasions.

• Once Lauren found out that the heart was not worth much money, why did she buy a real gold chain for it? (inference) Even though the heart was worth only $10 to $20, it still had great value to Lauren because it reminded her of her beloved grandmother. The necklace hadn’t lost any
of its worth to Lauren, so she probably decided it still belonged on a gold chain. Also, it might have been a way to honor her grandmother’s memory.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

- In the first article, Tod Olson writes, “The real fun of toy collecting is buying regular toys with the hope that their worth will increase over time.” Why might this be fun? Do you agree with Olson? (drawing conclusions) Some people might find this fun because it’s like a guessing or predicting game. People want to find out if their prediction was correct—and they like the possibility that it could make them rich!

- Imagine you’re a dictionary writer. (That’s called a lexicographer!) Based on what you read in both articles, write a dictionary entry for valuable. Include at least two definitions. (synthesizing) Answers will vary but should be similar to: 1.) worth a lot of money; 2.) having special meaning.

**3. Skill Building**

**Featured Skill: Synthesizing**

- Distribute our synthesizing activity and have students complete it in groups.

- Call on a student to read aloud the writing prompt on page 19. As a pre-writing activity, invite students to turn and talk with a partner about the object they will write about.

**Ideas to Engage and Inspire**

- **Create a Virtual Gallery** After students write their narratives about a valuable object, invite them to each create a Chatterpix entry for it. They can upload a photo or drawing of the object, then record a narration about it. Have them share their final products with the class, creating a “gallery” of items that have meaning to your students.

**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**

Ask students to imagine it’s 2068, and they’ve discovered that one of their old toys is worth thousands of dollars. Have them make an ad for the toy with a drawing and an explanation of why it’s worth so much, based on what they read.

**For Advanced Readers**

Have students reread the play *The Necklace* in the December 2017/January 2018 issue of *Storyworks*. Lead them in a discussion to compare and contrast how learning a necklace had little value affected Matilda in the play and Lauren in the essay.

**For ELL Students**

These articles include several words that mean “having great value,” either in money or in meaning to the owner. They include costly, valuable, priceless, prized, and precious. Prompt students to look for such words, or preview them together.

**For Reading Partners**

In pairs, have one student read the first text and the other read the second. They should each summarize the article for their partner. Pairs can then discuss what was different and what was the same about what they read.