Think About It!

Critical-Thinking Questions: After reading “The Big One,” think about the whole story to answer the questions below.

1. In the story, Joe says “All fishermen are hopeful people.” Do you think Joe is a hopeful person?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think Joe wanted his family to understand his love of fishing? Do you think it’s important for family members to enjoy the same activities? Explain your answer.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Pick Your Own Vocabulary Words

**Directions:** We’ve given you the definitions of five important words from this issue’s story “The Big One.” Look for the words as you read. Then pick out three more words that are new to you. Write their definitions, using context clues or a dictionary to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
<th>IT MEANS . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. official</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>recognized as certain, as if someone in charge said so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. bait</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>something used to attract fish so they can be caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. slumped</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>sank down heavily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. reel</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>pull something in by winding a fishing line around a spool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. waterlogged</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>soaked through with water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY OWN WORDS:**

| 6.                |          |
| 7.                |          |
| 8.                |          |
Finding the Main Idea

**Directions:** The main idea is the most important message or idea in a story. The main idea can be stated directly, or you can infer it from the characters' words or actions. Answer each of the questions in the chart below about “The Big One.” Then respond to the questions that follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At the beginning of the story</th>
<th>By the end of the story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is Joe’s dad’s attitude toward fishing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does Joe feel about going ice fishing with his dad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What does Joe consider to be a big catch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.** At the end of the story, Joe says, “Altogether, we caught one fish . . . But it didn’t matter. We talked and laughed and ate and had a great time. That’s what fishing is . . .” In your own words, explain what Joe means.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

**5.** Write one sentence that sums up the main idea of the story.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

**Your Turn!** Use your responses to help you answer the writing prompt on page 14: Imagine Joe wants to convince a friend to try fishing. Write an email from Joe to his friend, explaining what he’s gotten out of the activity.
Understanding Setting

**Directions:** Setting is the time period and place in which a story happens. By describing the setting of a story, an author can help you imagine living in that world. Answer the questions below to help you understand the setting in “The Big One.”

1. Look at the illustration on page 10. What does it tell you about the main setting of the story?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

2. Near the beginning of the story, Joe remembers taking a trip on his dad’s friend’s fishing boat. How did Joe feel in this setting? How did his family feel?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

3. Using details from the story, describe where the ice-fishing trip takes place. Why is Joe worried about his dad in this setting?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

4. How do Joe’s dad’s feelings about fishing change in this setting? How does Joe react to the change?

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
Directions: The action of a story is called the plot. Many plots start with a problem or issue. The issue gets more complicated until it reaches a climax, or turning point—usually the most dramatic part of the story. The result of the climax follows, then the conclusion. Fill in each block in the pyramid below to identify the plot parts of “The Big One.” Use the prompts to help you.

1. Opening Action
   What did Joe do “one day last year”? What problem does he have after that?

2. Rising Action
   Where does Joe go? With whom? What happens there for the first several hours?

3. Climax
   What exciting event suddenly occurs?

4. Falling Action
   What is the result of the exciting event? How does it affect Joe?

5. Conclusion
   What happens at the very end? How does it solve Joe’s problem?
Directions: In the story “The Big One,” author Tommy Greenwald sometimes uses figurative language to describe the characters, setting, and action. This means the words have a meaning other than what they actually say on the page. Complete this activity to help you understand two types of figurative language.

**Personification** means describing something nonhuman as if it were a person. Writers use personification to help readers picture or think about something in a new way.

- “I got smacked in the face with the coldest wind I’d ever felt in my life” is an example of personification. The word smacked shows that the wind was so cold it felt like a person hitting Joe in the face.

**Hyperbole** is the use of exaggeration to make a point.

- “My dad turned on the light, which was brighter than the sun” is an example of hyperbole. The writer is exaggerating how bright the light is, to show how glaring it seemed to Joe as he was waking up.

Write Your Own Sentences!

Write a sentence using personification. The subject of your sentence should be something found in nature, such as the wind, snow, rain, the moon, the sun, flowers, or trees.

1. What will the subject of your sentence be?

2. What are some words usually used for humans that you could use to describe this subject?

3. Write your sentence on the line below.

Write a sentence that includes an example of hyperbole. Your sentence should exaggerate the way someone or something acts, sounds, looks, feels, tastes, or smells.

4. What person, animal, or object will you write about?

5. What words could you use to exaggerate the way the person, animal, or object acts, sounds, looks, tastes, feels, or smells?

6. Write your sentence on the line below.
**“The Big One” Quiz**

**Directions:** Read the story “The Big One” in the February 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. According to Joe, when you’re fishing you spend most of your time _____.
   - A) talking
   - B) drinking cocoa
   - C) catching fish
   - D) waiting

2. You can infer that Joe’s dad says “I have to take a nap” because he . . .
   - A) had a hard day at work.
   - B) got up early to go fishing with Joe.
   - C) wants an excuse to avoid going fishing.
   - D) is tired after fixing his car.

3. What worries Joe when he first hears about the ice fishing trip?
   - A) He needs a parent to come with him.
   - B) He’ll have to get up very early.
   - C) It will be very cold on the lake.
   - D) He doesn’t know what ice fishing is.

4. In the sentence “I slumped in my chair,” the word slumped tells you that Joe . . .
   - A) fell off his chair
   - B) sat up straighter
   - C) jumped out of his chair
   - D) sank down heavily in his chair

5. You can infer that Joe’s dad keeps the stuffed elephant because . . .
   - A) it shows that fishing really is pointless.
   - B) it’s a reminder of the fun time they had.
   - C) he knows Joe’s mom loves stuffed animals.
   - D) he wants to clean it up and donate it.

6. You can tell that at the end of the story Joe feels _____.
   - A) bored
   - B) content
   - C) dumb
   - D) nervous

**Constructed Response**

**Directions:** On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

7. Compare how Joe’s dad feels about fishing at the beginning of the story with how he feels by the end.

8. What does the title “The Big One” refer to?
"The Big One" Quiz

Directions: Read the story “The Big One” in the February 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. Joe’s love of fishing began when . . .
   A his mother signed him up for a fishing club.
   B he caught a big bluefish on a fishing trip with his family and his dad’s friend.
   C he went ice fishing for the first time.
   D his friend Charlie took him on an early morning fishing trip.

2. In the lines “It was official. Nobody in the family liked fishing except for me,” official means the same as  . . .
   A untrue
   B irritating
   C surprising
   D definite

3. You can infer that Joe’s dad says “I have to take a nap” because he . . .
   A had a hard day at work.
   B got up early to go fishing with Joe.
   C wants to avoid going fishing.
   D is tired after fixing his car.

4. In the line “No one really gets it, except for other fishermen,” what does “it” refer to?
   A why people fish early in the morning
   B why worms are used as bait for fishing
   C why fishing is fun
   D why beginner’s luck is important

5. When Joe’s dad is getting hot chocolate instead of fishing with him, you can tell that Joe feels embarrassed and  . . .
   A disappointed
   B bored
   C furious
   D nervous

6. Which line from the story supports the answer to question 5?
   A “Which really means we waited.”
   B “Suddenly, I was mad at myself.”
   C “Couldn’t he like fishing just this once?”
   D “I reeled it in, full of excitement.”

7. Why does Joe say “I felt dumb for liking fishing”?
   A He and his dad were bored while they were waiting to catch a fish.
   B He felt guilty that his dad was cold and they hadn’t caught anything.
   C His dad told him that fishing was boring.
   D Everyone caught a fish except for him.

8. You can infer that Joe’s dad keeps the stuffed elephant because . . .
   A it shows that fishing really is pointless.
   B he knows Joe’s mom loves stuffed animals.
   C it’s a souvenir of the fun time they had.
   D he wants to clean it up and donate it.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

9. How does Joe’s dad’s attitude about fishing change throughout the story?
10. Explain why “The Big One” is a good title for this story.
Imagine Joe wants to convince a friend to try fishing.

Write an email from Joe to his friend, explaining what he’s gotten out of the activity.

Entries will be judged on:

- a clearly stated main idea
- good organization and transitions
- effective use of supporting evidence
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My Response

My name: ________________________________

Teacher’s name: ________________________________

School name: ________________________________

School address: ____________________________________________

(Remember to include city, state, and ZIP code!)

School phone: ________________________________

Parent’s name and email (optional): ________________________________

See page 14 of the February 2020 issue of Storyworks for more information about this contest.