

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

A Penny Saved Is a Penny Earned

by Jan Siebold

- 1 On the way home from my old grade school, there was a corner drugstore called Thompson's. Mr. Thompson was the pharmacist, and his wife worked at the checkout counter. The store carried a little bit of everything: medicine, magazines, cosmetics, school supplies, toys, greeting cards, and more. It also had the best candy counter of any store around.
- 2 A few years ago, I was in Thompson's with my mom. I was wandering through the aisles as I had done hundreds of times before when I noticed a new item in the school supply section.
- 3 It was a deluxe set of twenty-four colored pencils. They came in a flat tin box that was painted with a picture of the pencils. There were three sets. I opened one of them.
- 4 The pencils were sharpened to perfect points. The rich colors offered endless possibilities compared to my set of eight basic colors at home. I was going through a comic-book-writing phase at that time. I knew that I had to have them.
- 5 I looked at the bottom of the tin. The price was \$2.98. This presented a slight problem. You see, Mom had bought Harry and Vi Marshall a potted plant to apologize for my bike tracks in their new driveway. She and Dad were withholding my allowance until the plant was paid for. I knew that there was no point in asking them for the money.
- 6 When we got home, I took the plug out of the bottom of my piggy bank and counted the change. I had \$1.86. That meant I still needed \$1.12 plus tax.
- 7 The solution was tossed my way the following Monday when I stopped at Thompson's after school to look at the pencils. I had asked Mrs. Thompson how much they would cost with tax.
- 8 "They'd come to \$3.22," she reported. "Shall I ring them up for you?"
- 9 "Maybe another day," I answered.

- 10 I walked out of the store and sat down on the bench that was right outside the door. As I was sitting there feeling sorry for myself, two junior high boys came out of the store with bags of candy. I saw one of them toss a few pennies onto the sidewalk. The boys kept walking.
- 11 I waited until they had rounded the corner, then I went to pick up the pennies. There were three of them. I put them in my pocket. Lots of times, I had seen kids throw away pennies that they had received as change. In fact, it used to drive Mom crazy when she saw it happen.
- 12 “No one can afford to throw away a penny,” she would say. “Or if they can afford it, they should donate their pennies to charity.”
- 13 I began to look around the sidewalk. Under the bench, there were two more pennies. I added them to the collection in my pocket. My career as a penny-pincher had begun.
- 14 Every day after school, I checked the outside of Thompson’s. On the average, I found two or three pennies a day. At that rate, I figured it would only take me a couple of weeks to have enough money to buy the pencils.
- 15 I started to look for coins in other places, too. I never passed a phone booth without stopping to check the coin return. I never actually found any coins there, but I did find a dime on the floor of a phone booth. Sometimes there would be a stray penny on a sidewalk, or in a store or parking lot. I really hit the jackpot when I found thirty-seven cents in the pocket of my old jeans.
- 16 By the end of three weeks, I finally had enough money to buy the pencils. I put all of my coins into a paper bag and headed over to Thompson’s. I hurried to the school supply section.
- 17 The pencils were gone.
- 18 Then I heard Mrs. Thompson ask, “Are these what you’re looking for?”
- 19 I looked toward the counter. She held up a set of the pencils. “When the second set was sold, I put these away for you,” she explained. “I know you’ve had your eye on them.”
- 20 “Thanks! I finally have enough money,” I told her.
- 21 I dumped the coins out onto the counter.
- 22 “Just right,” she announced.

23 She put the pencils in a bag for me. Then she reached over and put a box of chocolate covered raisins in the bag, too.

24 "These are for being such a loyal customer," said Mrs. Thompson.

25 I thanked her again and went home to try out my new colors.

From *Rope Burn* by Jan Siebold, copyright © 1998 by Jan Siebold. Used by permission of Albert Whitman & Company.

- 17** The narrator’s actions in paragraphs 11 through 16 of the story show that he —
- A** is determined to achieve his goals
 - B** often gets what he wants without much effort
 - C** knows he should give money away instead of spending it
 - D** relies on others to think of solutions to his problems
-

- 18** What is the meaning of the word withholding in paragraph 5?
- F** Increasing in amount
 - G** Punishing harshly
 - H** Refusing to give
 - J** Using as one’s property
-

- 19** According to the story, the reason the narrator doesn’t initially have enough money to buy the pencils is that —
- A** he has damaged someone’s property
 - B** he has spent his money on things he doesn’t need
 - C** school supplies are expensive
 - D** the sales tax is too high

20 Read the following sentence from paragraph 7.

The solution was tossed my way the following Monday when I stopped at Thompson's after school to look at the pencils.

What can the reader conclude about the narrator from this sentence?

- F** He will find the money he needs at the drugstore that day.
- G** He will get the money he needs in an unexpected way.
- H** He will work at the drugstore after school each day to earn money.
- J** He will collect money at school before going to the drugstore.

21 Based on their actions described in the story, the narrator's parents most likely think it is important to —

- A** buy gifts to give to neighbors
- B** find hobbies that require artistic ability
- C** help children take responsibility for their behavior
- D** pick up money when it is found on the street

- 22** The narrator's actions in paragraph 13 imply that he will —
- F** observe his surroundings more closely wherever he goes
 - G** keep all his pennies in his pocket until he has saved enough
 - H** stay at the bench and collect all the pennies people throw away
 - J** try to think of a different way to collect money

23 Which sentences best help to create suspense in the story?

- A** *"They'd come to \$3.22," she reported. "Shall I ring them up for you?"*
- B** *I hurried to the school supply section. The pencils were gone.*
- C** *I looked toward the counter. She held up a set of the pencils.*
- D** *I dumped the coins out onto the counter. "Just right," she announced.*

24 Read these sentences from paragraph 4.

The pencils were sharpened to perfect points. The rich colors offered endless possibilities compared to my set of eight basic colors at home.

The author uses the description of the pencils to show —

- F** how sad the narrator feels when he can't afford them
- G** how much the narrator wants to buy them
- H** that the colors inspire the narrator with ideas for his comic book
- J** that the pencils the narrator has are no longer usable

25 Mrs. Thompson contributes to solving the narrator's problem mostly by —

- A** telling the narrator how much money he needs to buy the pencils
- B** suggesting places that the narrator should search for coins
- C** giving the narrator a box of chocolate-covered raisins for being a loyal customer
- D** saving a box of pencils behind the counter until the narrator can afford them