

## Sixth Grade ELA Study Guide

### Two Quarters

*by Everett Taylor*

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I inhaled deeply and looked over New York Harbor from atop Lady Liberty. Pulling two quarters from my pocket, my thoughts returned to my childhood.

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I stared at the small silver coin in my palm and stuffed the tiny treasure into my pocket. I knew my dime was not enough to pay the fifty-cent admission for the Centennial Exposition. The greatest modern inventions in America would be on display, and I would not get to see them.

Life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had been exciting these last few years since we learned the first World's Fair in the United States would be held in our city. This exposition would commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence that had taken place in our great city 100 years prior. As well, the construction of the buildings for the fair provided a much-needed job for my father. As an Irish immigrant, work was often hard to come by. But many workers were needed to construct the Main Exhibition Hall in Fairmount Park, so my father had had reliable work for the past eighteen months.

My father earned just enough money to make ends meet, and I was lucky to find a job as a newspaper carrier. I always gave half to my parents, and I spent most of my remaining earnings on penny candy for my six younger brothers and sisters. One small dime was all I had to show for my efforts. I sighed and walked toward home.

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My mother's melodic Irish lilt called my name from the kitchen. As I sat at the kitchen table, my mother smiled, placing a plate of warm food in front of me.

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"Thomas, my boy!" My father boomed as loud as thunder as he walked in and gave me a firm pat on the shoulder.

Eager to hear about his day's work at the construction site, I peppered him with questions. "You know I can't reveal the secrets of the fair!" my father teased with his deep, throaty laugh. "I know, but it's just that I want so badly to go!" I pestered.

My parents looked at each other knowingly.

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Mother explained, "We both see how desperately you wish to attend the Centennial Exposition, Thomas. Each month you have willingly handed over your earnings. Instead of spending selfishly, you chose to share with your family."

"Your mother and I have been saving that money for you, and we have just enough for you and me to go to the fair!" my father continued, placing two shiny quarters in my hand. My eyes widened.

The next morning, I awakened early, eager for the 12 o'clock opening of the Centennial Exposition. When the time finally arrived, my father and I walked to Fairmount Park. We joined the masses of people surrounding a small stage where President Ulysses S. Grant officially opened the exhibition. His speech was followed by the loud staccato of a one-hundred-gun salute.

We pressed into the Main Exhibition Hall, and my father, having had a hand in its creation, announced proudly, "This building is 1,880 feet in length. It contains exhibits from 30 nations around the world!" My father pulled me towards an exhibit advertising an invention called the telephone.

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I listened as a man announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Alexander Graham Bell, and I will be demonstrating the telephone." He proceeded to pick up the device, which he called a transmitter, and speak into it. Nothing happened, but then, another voice was heard through the transmitter. The crowd curiously scanned the bystanders to determine the source of the voice.

"My friends," Bell began, "the voice you hear belongs to a man stationed at the opposite end of this great hall."

My mind was spinning as I tried to determine how a voice could travel through a wire. My father tugged my arm and pointed, "The giant steam engine is just this way."

Eager to see the main attraction, we quickly made our way to Machinery Hall. My father and I elbowed through the throng of onlookers, hoping to be as close as possible to the massive machinery.

My father explained, “This is the Corliss steam engine, and it’s the largest ever built! It’s providing the power for all the machines you see displayed in this building.”

My jaw dropped as we walked around the enormous beast, watching the rhythmic movements of its intricate parts.

My father then led me outdoors. “There it is, Thomas—the arm and torch of what will one day be the Statue of Liberty,” my father marveled.

“How would you like to go up there?” my father asked, pointing to the balcony surrounding the torch. “Tickets are 50 cents,” I sighed, noticing a posted sign.

My father held open his hand with two more polished quarters.

I held back tears that were threatening to spill. “Thank you,” I managed to whisper.

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“Thomas, you deserve it!” my father told me, his eyes **glistening** with pride.

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*Fifty years ago*, I thought to myself. For many, the Statue of Liberty is the symbol of freedom and possibility. But for me, she is the symbol of sacrifice and love.

1. Which inference about Thomas can be made based on the events in the story?

- A. He appreciates his large family.
- B. He understands the value of hard work.
- C. He has knowledge of technology.
- D. He is committed to freedom and possibility.

2. Which word describes Thomas?

- A. curious
- B. daring
- C. disappointed
- D. hesitant

3. What does the point of view from which the story is written help the reader understand?

- A. The motivations of Thomas's father
- B. Thomas's responses to the events
- C. The influence of Thomas's job
- D. Thomas's plans for the future

4. In paragraph 23, what does the word ***glistening*** mean?

- A. small
- B. shining
- C. meaningless
- D. massive

5. Which quote shows how the two quarters impacted the narrator's life?

- A. "My mother's melodic Irish lilt called my name from the kitchen."
- B. "My jaw dropped as we walked around the enormous beast, watching the rhythmic movements of its intricate parts."
- C. "One small dime was all I had to show for my efforts. I sighed and walked toward home"
- D. "For many, the Statue of Liberty is the symbol of freedom and possibility. But for me, she is the symbol of sacrifice and love."

6. What is the reason the author structures the story as a memory?

- A. to highlight the importance of memories
- B. to reveal the impact of a childhood experience
- C. to establish the purpose of the Centennial Exposition
- D. to emphasize the completion of the Statue of Liberty

7. Which statement best describes the theme or moral of the story?

- A. Families should always work together.
- B. Difficult circumstances unify families.
- C. Selfless acts are often rewarded.
- D. Kind deeds often go unnoticed.

8. Which sentence summarizes the story?

- A. Thomas visits the Statue of Liberty and reflects on it as a symbol of his father's devotion to his family.
- B. Thomas is a hardworking young man who tries to save his money in order to attend the 1876 World's Fair in his hometown.
- C. Thomas recollects a childhood experience when his sacrifice is rewarded with a visit to the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia.
- D. Thomas is surprised when his parents inform him that he will attend the World's Fair to observe the newest technological inventions.

9. What does paragraph 24 reveal about Thomas?

- A. He loves his mother and siblings.
- B. He understands his father's sacrifice.
- C. He is concerned that his happiness will fade.
- D. He is overwhelmed by his feelings about the Statue of Liberty.

10. Why might the author have chosen to introduce and to conclude the story in different time periods of the character's life?

- A. to emphasize the completion of the Statue of Liberty
- B. to highlight the significance of memories
- C. to establish the purpose of the Centennial Exposition
- D. to reveal the impact of the childhood experience

11. Why is paragraph 2 important to the story?

- A. develops the resolution
- B. contributes to the subplot
- C. foreshadows the falling action
- D. establishes the conflict

12. Which sentence from the selection best explains why Thomas experiences a sense of security?

- A. "Life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had been exciting these last few years."
- B. "As well, the construction of the building for the fair provided a much-needed job for my father."
- C. "I was lucky to find a job as a newspaper carrier, but I felt guilty keeping the money."
- D. "Eager to hear about his day's work at the construction site, I peppered him with questions."

13. How is Thomas affected by the time period in which the story takes place?

- A. He learns the value of work
- B. He appreciates his large family
- C. He is committed to freedom and possibility
- D. He has knowledge of the technology

14. Why is the The Centennial Exposition most significant to Thomas's father?

- A. It allows him to entertain his son.
- B. It allows him to improve the city
- C. It allows him to earn a living for his family
- D. It allows him to observe innovations

15. The author uses the simile in paragraph 6: “

“Thomas, my boy!” My father boomed as loud as thunder as he walked in and gave me a firm pat on the shoulder.” What does this reveal about Thomas’ father?

- A. He is respectful
- B. He is overbearing
- C. He has a commanding presence
- D. has a pompous attitude

Answers

1.B	2.A	3.B	4 .B	5.D
6.B	7.C	8.B	9.B	10.D
11.D	12.B	13.A	14.C	15.C

