

Name:

Class:

“The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers

Make Predictions

Directions: The words listed in the box below represent important ideas and/or vocabulary from the story “The Treasure of Lemon Brown.” Use the following words to make predictions and generate statements about what you think the story will be about. Write at least five sentences.

Basketball	Family	Treasure
Math	War	Newspaper
Homeless	Abandoned	Delinquent

Summarize the Story

Directions: Fill in the following chart using evidence from the story.

Setting

Conflict

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Characters

Themes

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Analyze Figurative Language

Quote	Figurative Language	Explanation
"The dark sky filled with angry swirling clouds..."	Personification	The "angry" clouds mean that the clouds are moving quickly in an aggressive manner and show that there is an impending storm.
"His father's words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears."		
"That must be some kind of a joke. Now you just get into your room and hit those books."		
"Gusts of wind made bits of paper dance between the parked cars."		
"He reached the house just as another flash of lightning changed the night to day for an instant, then returned the graffiti-scarred building to the grim shadows"		
"The voice was high and brittle, like dry twigs being broken, surely not one he had ever heard before."		
"Don't try nothin' 'cause I got a razor here sharp enough to cut a week into nine days!"		
"One day I got tired, sat down to rest a spell and felt a tap on my shoulder. Hard times caught up with me."		
"I sung the blues so sweet that if I sang at a funeral, the dead would commence to rocking with the beat."		
"A car passed, its tires hissing over the wet street and its red tail lights glowing in the darkness."		

"The Treasure of Lemon Brown" After Reading Questions

1. Why isn't Greg allowed to play basketball?

2. Why does Greg go into the abandoned building?

3. Describe the building that Greg enters.

4. What does Lemon Brown say or do that helps you infer people have attacked him before?

5. What is Lemon wearing? What can you infer based on the description of Lemon's clothes?

6. Why is Greg unafraid of Lemon Brown?

7. What do you think Lemon means when he says "hard times caught up with me"?

8. What is it about Greg that reminds Lemon of his son?

9. Why did Lemon stop singing the blues?

10. What motivates the thugs to attack Lemon and Greg?

11. What stops the criminals from hurting Lemon and Greg?

12. What is Lemon Brown's prized treasure?

13. Why does Lemon's treasure mean so much to him? What do the items symbolize?

14. How does Greg's opinion of Lemon change by the end of the story?

15. Is Greg's conflict resolved with his father? Explain.

Lemon Brown says *everyone's got a treasure* which teaches Greg an important life lesson. Pick one of the following writing options below. Answer in a full paragraph.

- A. What is your most prized possession... your TREASURE? What does it mean to you? Explain.
- B. What is an important lesson you've learned in your life? Who taught it to you? How has it changed the way you live?

Summarize the Story **Answer Key**

<p>Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harlem, New York • The stoop of the building where Greg and his father live • An abandoned building across the street • It's raining heavily outside • Takes place sometime after World War I 	<p>Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg and his father argue over basketball and math grades; his father lectures him • Greg is upset internally because he wants badly to play basketball but doesn't want to study • Greg chooses to cross the street instead of go inside to study • Greg and Lemon Brown initially get into an external conflict because Lemon is unsure of Greg's intentions • The criminals attack Lemon and Greg • Lemon must face the everyday conflicts of being homeless
<p>Characters</p> <p>Greg's father, Mr. Ridley:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left school when he was 13 • Postal worker • Wants the best future for his son • Fair, hardworking, father <p>Greg Ridley:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 years old • Wants to play basketball • Stubborn - refuses to study • Has a negative attitude toward his dad • At first, doesn't appreciate his father's story of how he made it • Worried/uneasy - he keeps replaying the argument in his head • Regretful, matures throughout the story • Learns to appreciate his dad and Lemon <p>Lemon Brown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective, brave, wise • Former blues musician • Used to be married and have a son (they both passed away) • Homeless, older man • Willing to protect his treasure at all costs <p>The gang:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent, greedy, careless 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has a treasure • Not all prized possessions are worth a lot of money • Parents want their kids to be successful • Relationships with family are important • Don't judge someone you don't know • The worth of something is determined by the person who owns it

Analyze Figurative Language **Answer Key**

Quote	Figurative Language	Explanation
"The dark sky filled with angry swirling clouds..."	Personification	The "angry" clouds mean that the clouds are moving quickly in an aggressive manner and show that there is an impending storm.
"His father's words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears."	Simile	Like thunder that echoes, Greg's father's lectures echo in Greg's mind.
"That must be some kind of a joke. Now you just get into your room and hit those books."	Idiom	To "hit the books" is an expression that means to study hard for academic reasons.
"Gusts of wind made bits of paper dance between the parked cars."	Personification	The paper blew around in the wind as if they were dancing. It lets readers imagine the windy, stormy scene.
"He reached the house just as another flash of lightning changed the night to day for an instant, then returned the graffiti-scarred building to the grim shadows"	Hyperbole	The lightning was so bright that the whole city lit up as if it were day again, but the lightning didn't actually change the night to day.
"The voice was high and brittle, like dry twigs being broken, surely not one he had ever heard before."	Simile	Lemon's voice was frail and nervous, because he is an old man and was afraid of being attacked.
"Don't try nothin' 'cause I got a razor here sharp enough to cut a week into nine days!"	Hyperbole	Lemon's razor is extremely sharp, which he exaggerates in order to scare off any potential criminals.
"One day I got tired, sat down to rest a spell and felt a tap on my shoulder. Hard times caught up with me."	Personification	"Hard times" tapped Lemon on the shoulder meaning that Lemon feels like the hardships he faced in life appeared suddenly. Before he could figure his life out, the hard times were there.
"I sung the blues so sweet that if I sang at a funeral, the dead would commence to rocking with the beat."	Hyperbole	Lemon said he was so talented and people enjoyed his music so much, even the dead would awaken to dance.
"A car passed, its tires hissing over the wet street and its red tail lights glowing in the darkness."	Personification/ Onomatopoeia	The tires did not actually hiss, but made a similar buzzing noise that sounds like a "hiss." This description builds suspense in the story because Greg is wandering around a creepy building and keeps hearing strange noises.

After Reading Questions **Answer Key**

1. Why isn't Greg allowed to play basketball?

Greg is failing math and his father won't allow him to play until he brings his grades up.

2. Why does Greg go into the abandoned building?

He is avoiding studying and his father. As he is sitting outside, it starts to rain. He sees an open door to a building where there have been checkers tournaments in the past.

3. Describe the building that Greg enters.

The building is covered in graffiti; it has dirty windows and a musty smell. There is a table inside, along with a pile of rags, a torn mattress, and a beat up couch.

4. What does Lemon Brown say or do that helps you infer people have attacked him before?

Lemon immediately threatens Greg and lets him know that he has a razor. He also asks, "you aint one of those bad boys looking for my treasure?" which implies people have come looking for his treasure before.

5. What is Lemon wearing? What can you infer based on the description of Lemon Brown's clothes?

He wears dirty shoes, his legs are wrapped in rags, and he has on layers of dirty coats; readers can infer Lemon is homeless.

6. Why is Greg unafraid of Lemon Brown?

Greg has seen Lemon before, picking through the trash on the corner and pulling clothes out of a Salvation Army box. Greg also couldn't see any weapon in hand. He recognized Lemon as an old, weak homeless man from the neighborhood and considered him not armed or dangerous.

7. What do you think Lemon means when he says "hard times caught up with me"?

He is probably alluding to how he became homeless. Eventually, after losing his family and his job, he entered poverty and eventually couldn't afford to live anywhere.

8. What is it about Greg that reminds Lemon of his son?

Greg has big "moon eyes." Lemon believes, like his son Jesse, Greg is young, innocent, and pure-hearted... someone who believes anything is possible.

9. Why did Lemon stop singing the blues?

Lemon says he had nothing left to sing about. Music isn't as good or powerful when you feel there's no meaning or purpose.

10. What motivates the thugs to attack Lemon and Greg?

They think that Lemon Brown's treasure is worth a lot of money.

11. What stops the criminals from hurting Lemon and Greg?

Lemon hurls himself at the men from the top of the stairs and steals their flashlight.

12. What is Lemon Brown's prized treasure?

His treasure is old newspaper clippings from when he was a famous blues singer and a harmonica.

13. Why does Lemon's treasure mean so much to him? What do the items symbolize?

Lemon gave his son Jesse the harmonica and clippings as a gift. After Jesse was killed in the war, they sent Lemon back his son's personal belongings and that's all his son had on him. Jesse held onto the items because he wanted to make something of himself, just like his father. The items symbolize where Lemon came from and his most successful moments in his life. The fact that his son held onto these items meant his son was proud of him.

14. How does Greg's opinion of Lemon change by the end of the story?

Initially, Greg is afraid of the figure in the dark. Then he sees Lemon and believes him to be some fragile, harmless, old man that he laughs at. By the end of the story, Greg is grateful for Lemon. He believes he's a good man who has gone through a terrible loss. Lemon saved his life. He is not worried about Lemon; he knows he will be OK because he has good values.

15. Is Greg's conflict resolved with his father? Explain.

It will be. When Greg thinks of the lecture that his father will give him, he smiles. Greg has learned from Lemon to appreciate family and understands now that his father only wants Greg to be successful. He learns family is more valuable than anything else.

Lemon Brown says everyone's got a treasure which teaches Greg an important life lesson. Pick one of the following writing options below. Answer in a full paragraph.

- A. What is your most prized possession... your TREASURE? What does it mean to you? Explain.
- B. What is an important lesson you've learned in our life? Who taught it to you? How has it changed your life?

Answers will vary.