

Millionaires for the Month

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Seventh-graders Felix and Benji face a challenge from a billionaire: take a million dollars or a penny doubled every day of the month. Choosing the latter, while they would like to make better use of the money, there are rules about how and when it can be spent and the boys face complex, difficult decisions and make some frivolous, selfish choices. This engaging book, suitable for class read-aloud, literature circles, novel studies, independent reading, and math lessons, can launch discussions of the ethical and philosophical consequences of the characters choices, and explores personal finances, personal awareness, wealth, family, friendship, and personal and social responsibility.

Subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics
Grades 5-7

Evaluation Date: Oct 2023



Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

This book connects to the BC Curriculum Core Competencies of personal identity and personal and social responsibility. The text lends itself to the English Language Arts curriculum Big Ideas of "Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world" and "Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking." The text can be used to explore curricular content such as literary elements and provides opportunities to practice many of the comprehend and connect Curricular Competencies. Additionally, the story could be used as a hook for lessons in Math such as grade 6 financial literacy and multiplication.

This resource supports the Core Competencies of the BC curriculum:

- Communication
- Creative Thinking
- Critical & Reflective Thinking
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Awareness and Responsibility

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

Millionaires for the Month could be used as a classroom read-aloud, allowing for rich discussions about how the main characters, Felix and Benji, spend the money and the ethical and philosophical consequences of their choices. The story could be used to introduce lessons related to personal finances or personal awareness and responsibility. The book is also appropriate for literature circles, novel studies, or independent reading, and it lends itself well to accompany math lessons. For example, ask students to spend a million dollars, including provincial sales tax. And challenge students to decide whether they would want a million dollars, or a penny doubled for a month.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gender Roles, Identity & Sexual Orientation

Felix's sister is presented in a same-sex relationship in positive and normalizing terms. The story includes his sister's wedding to her partner.

Ability/Disability

Benji explicitly has learning disabilities and is seen to use accommodations such as untimed tests and speech-to-text features.

Socio-Economic

Felix feels insecure financially. He constantly compares himself to Benji, who appears to be wealthy, and Felix is concerned about contributing to the family as well, worried about not having enough money for shoes, clothes, and extracurriculars. The challenge of spending so much money with restrictions about how it is spent brings up definite questions around responsible spending.

Violence

Felix is verbally bullied at school. Felix's dog is hit by a car without graphic description.

Ethical and Legal

Felix and Benji both lie to their parents by omission about the spending challenge issued by Laura Friendly. There are big ethical questions about the circumstances of the challenge (the power dynamic and responsibility between adult and child relationships), wealth inequality, and social responsibility in spending and donating.

Humour

Age-appropriate humour is related to how they boys spend money such as buying a T-rex skull.

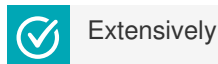
Safety

There is a brief description of one of the young boys driving a car in a parking lot. The boys engage in some risky behaviour and it is called out directly by the characters.

Sustainability

By nature of the challenge that they have to spend 5 million dollars within a month, they are wasteful. Other than a brief mention about food waste, it isn't addressed directly.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?




Millionaires for the Month presents the opportunity to explore and discuss several important themes, especially related to personal and social responsibilities. The considerations listed here are presented in a modern and sensitive way that contributes to student understanding of the topics.


GENERAL CONTENT

Content


Is the resource engaging?

 Extensively


Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

 Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?


 Extensively

Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?


 Moderately

Audience


Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

 Extensively


Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

 Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?

 Extensively


Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

 Extensively


The book is written to be engaging and fun while also exploring personal and social responsibilities related to friendship, stealing, and spending money. The story and writing style are age appropriate. There are mentions of current technology such as "iPad" "YouTube" and "Smartboard" that may date the text within a few years. There are limited visual enhancements in the text such as using dollar signs before the chapter numbers, an upside-down piggy bank, and showing a snapshot of the bank account balance presented on a smartphone.

TECHNICAL DESIGN


Does the resource make effective use of the medium?

 Extensively


Is the resource easy to use?

 Extensively


Is the location of illustrations appropriate?

 Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?


 Extensively

Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?


 Extensively

The novel's layout is in a typical chapter book format with a brightly coloured illustrated front and back cover. The book is divided into forty-four chapters with uniform text and consistent font, followed by the author's notes and acknowledgments.


Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

 Moderately

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

 Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

 Moderately

Plot description

The realistic fiction novel *Millionaires for the Month* follows the escapades of Felix and Benji as they participate in the Penny Doubled Challenge, they receive from tech billionaire Laura Friendly. The two seventh-grade boys are given a choice between a million dollars now, or a penny doubled for every day of the month: \$5, 368, 709. 12. They take the Penny Doubled Challenge, but it comes with rules about how and when they can spend it. The boys are faced with difficult decisions and appear entirely selfish and frivolous while they would really like to make better use of the money if they were allowed. Can friends be bought? Can money buy happiness? Benji and Felix will find out.

Related Comments

Both protagonists, Felix and Benji, are well-developed and easy to empathize with through their alternating viewpoints. The themes of excessive wealth, family, and friendship are focused and substantial with plenty of potential for discussion. The characters face complex conflicts and difficult decisions.

Genre

- Contemporary

Literary Highlights

- Complex conflict(s)
- Rich characterization
- Well-developed themes
- Point of view

Type

- Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**Reading Level**

- At intended grade level(s)

A free discussion guide is available from the Los Angeles Public Library.

GRADES AND SUBJECTS**Subjects**

- Career Education: 5-7
 - English Language Arts: 5-7
 - Mathematics: 5-7
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ADDITIONAL INFO**Copyright**

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