

LEVELED BOOK • R

# Morty Takes a Wooden Nickel



Written by Kathy Hoggan  
Illustrated by David Opie



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## Focus Question

What lesson does Morty learn?

## Words to Know

advertisement  
dejected  
estimate  
mint  
numismatist

penchant  
posting  
spirited  
utter

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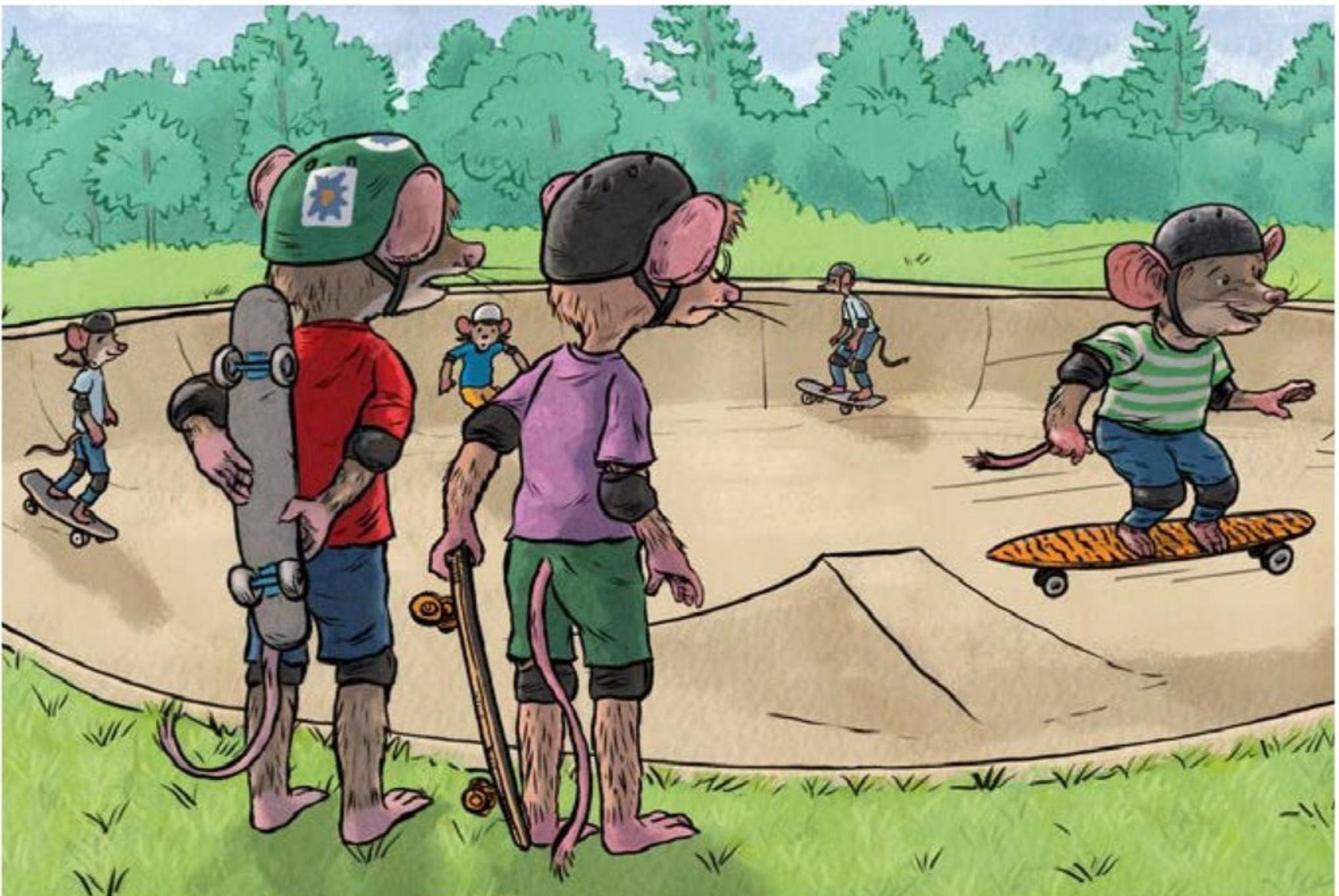
### Correlation

LEVEL R	
Fountas & Pinnell	N
Reading Recovery	30
DRA	30



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## Chapter One

Ben landed a jump and banked a turn at incredible speed on his new Leaping Tiger skateboard. “It’s like gliding on ice!” he exclaimed.

“Ben owns the place now,” Fred stated matter-of-factly.

“Yeah,” Morty mumbled as he concealed his hand-me-down skateboard behind his back.

That night at dinner, Morty summoned the courage to talk to his parents about his beat-up skateboard.

"I need a new board," Morty announced before shoveling a heaping forkful of vegetables into his mouth. "Mine has a million miles on it, and the wheels are junk."

"If you'd like a new skateboard, you can save up for it," Mother responded.

"Never mind," Morty grumbled, but all through dinner he daydreamed about riding his own Leaping Tiger board.

After dinner, Morty closed his bedroom door and pulled a dusty wooden box from under his bed. On his eighth birthday, Grandpa had given him his precious nickel collection. Morty had promised to take good care of it. "I was about your age when I started collecting them," Grandpa had said.



Morty opened the box, removed the booklets, and started counting the coins. *Some of these are really worn out. I hope they're still worth five cents*, he thought.

Later in the evening, Morty phoned Ben and asked, "Happen to know of anyone who likes old coins?"

"What, are you into coins now?" Ben questioned.

"Not really," Morty replied. "I'm going to sell my collection to get a new board."

"Try **posting** something online," Ben suggested.

"I'm sort of banned from the computer until my grades improve," Morty confessed.

"What about putting up a sign in the library?" Ben said. "Maybe the type of mouse who likes old books would also like old coins."

"Brilliant!" Morty said. As he started designing his flyer, he felt a twinge of guilt but pushed it out of his mind.

## Chapter Two

The next morning, Morty arrived at the library clutching his **advertisement**. The librarian was resheling books.

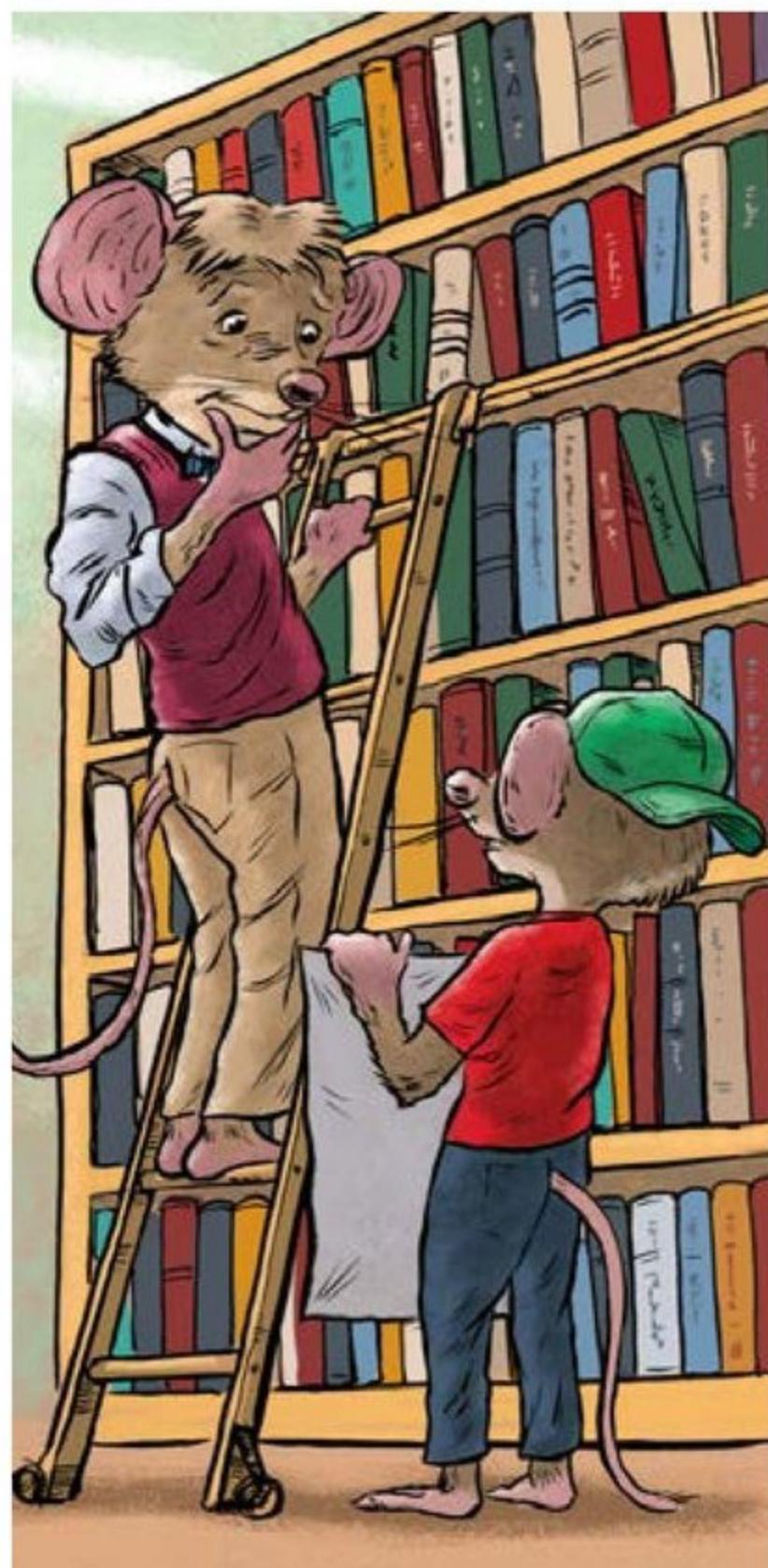
“I’d like to sell my coin collection,” Morty said. “May I put this sign up on the community board?”

“What kind of collection do you have?” the librarian inquired.

“I have eight hundred eighty nickels, and some are practically ancient,” Morty said.

The librarian scratched his chin thoughtfully. “Go ahead and post your flyer,” he said. “I have a **penchant** for old coins—if you bring them by, I’ll take a look.”

Morty sprinted home, grabbed the collection, and returned to the library. He placed the hefty box in front of the librarian.



"Let's see what we've got here," the librarian murmured. He lifted the lid and gently opened the booklets containing the coins. "That's a rare one," he whistled. "Wow, some of these are in **mint** condition! If you don't mind my asking, why are you selling this fine collection?"

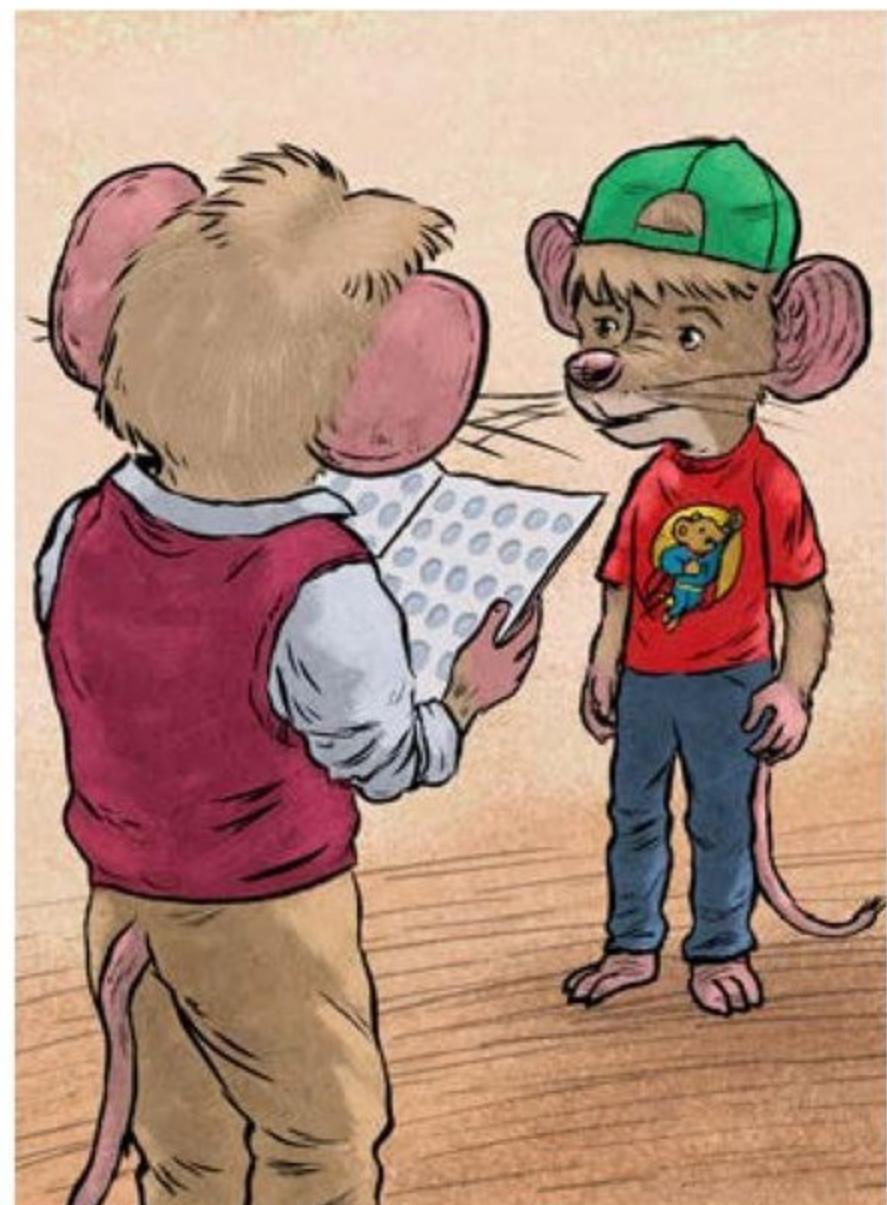
"To make some money," Morty replied. He avoided mentioning Grandpa—he didn't want to think about how this would make him feel.

"You must need money desperately to part with a treasure like this," the librarian said.

"I do," Morty muttered.

"Well," the librarian said, "I can give you two hundred fifty dollars for all of it."

Morty couldn't believe his ears. "That's great!" he squeaked, wondering how a box full of crummy old nickels could be worth so much.



## Chapter Three

Later that afternoon, the skate park was packed with **spirited** Saturday boarders. Morty cruised to the bench and plopped down. *Riding this board doesn't feel how I thought it would*, he thought, **dejected**. The sun warmed his ears, and his eyes drooped. *I don't know how I'm going to explain how I paid for it to Mom and Dad, and especially Grandpa.*

*Honk honk!* Morty turned to see Grandpa's car.





"Morty!" Grandpa called. "I'm headed to dinner at your house. Hop in—I'll give you a lift."

Morty loaded the Leaping Tiger into Grandpa's car, then climbed in.

Grandpa whistled through his teeth. "Your board's a beauty," he said. "That must've cost a pretty penny." *No pennies, just old nickels,* Morty thought.

## Chapter Four

Morty hid his board in the garage and washed his paws for dinner. *Hopefully Grandpa won't bring up the Leaping Tiger*, he worried.

As Mother was serving cheddar chowder, Grandpa turned to Morty. "Let's take a look at the nickel collection later," he suggested. "I brought a new addition."

Morty felt the color rise in his cheeks. He couldn't come up with any excuse. After sitting in painful silence, a lump forming in his throat, Morty came clean. "Actually, Grandpa, I don't have the collection anymore," he admitted in a soft voice.





The whole family paused. Morty waited, his eyes shifting from his plate to Grandpa. After what felt like ages, Grandpa gently put his paw on Morty's shoulder. "I know you don't," he said.

Morty looked at Grandpa in surprise. "What? How did you . . ." Morty started.

"My friend works at the library," Grandpa said. "He knows that I'm a **numismatist** and recognized the collection immediately."

The family sat in **utter** silence. "Oh, Morty," Mother finally said, shaking her head in disappointment.

"Well, how much did he give you for it?" Grandpa asked.

"Two hundred fifty dollars." Morty's voice was a feeble squeak.

Grandpa clicked his tongue. "Looks like you took a wooden nickel," he said. Morty didn't know what that meant. *Was it too much or too little?* he wondered.

"Dad, what do you think the collection is worth?" Father asked.

"At least fifteen hundred by my **estimate**. Many of those coins are extremely rare," Grandpa replied, leaning back in his chair.

"I guess that means I made a pretty bad deal," Morty said as his face flushed.



"My friend knows what that collection means to me," Grandpa said. "He intended to sell it back to me for what he paid. I'm lucky he was the one who purchased it—anyone else and my years of hard work would be gone."

Morty was ashamed that he hadn't seen the value of those nickels. Most of all, though, he was ashamed that he had betrayed Grandpa.

"I can't return the board for full price, but I'll sell it," Morty said, tears rolling down his cheeks. "I'll mow lawns and wash cars until I get the money I need to pay you back."

"I would like the money back," Grandpa replied. "And I'd like to keep the collection until you're older."





Morty understood. "I'm sorry, Grandpa," he sniffled. "I made a huge mistake." He rose from his seat and wrapped Grandpa in a hug.

"That's all right, Morty," Grandpa said. "We all make mistakes."

"The nickels will always be special to me because they are special to you," Morty said. "When you're ready to trust me with them again, I'll treasure them forever."

Grandpa patted Morty's back. "Or until *your* grandson comes along," he said with a wink.

## Glossary

<b>advertisement</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a public announcement about a product, service, or cause that is made to attract interest or promote sales (p. 7)
<b>dejected</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	feeling sad or depressed because of a failure or loss (p. 9)
<b>estimate</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a rough calculation (p. 13)
<b>mint</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	in a condition that is perfect or like new (p. 8)
<b>numismatist</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a person who studies or collects coins or other currency (p. 12)
<b>penchant</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a strong liking or tendency (p. 7)
<b>posting</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	putting a message on a blog, message board, or other part of the Internet; displaying an announcement (p. 6)
<b>spirited</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	full of enthusiasm or determination; lively (p. 9)
<b>utter</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	absolute, total, or complete (p. 12)

# Morty Takes a Wooden Nickel

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,137

## Connections

### Writing

Write a letter to Morty and give him ideas about how to earn money to purchase a skateboard.

### Math

Grandpa's 880 nickels are worth \$1,500. If Morty had sold the coins for their full value, how much more would Grandpa have had to pay for the collection?

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