



## A Lesson on John's Bright Idea by Brittany Potter

**Grade Level:** Grade 7

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** common core, john's bright idea, reading, writing

**Lesson Description:** This lesson will have students analyze the lessons taught in John's Bright Idea. They will use critical thinking skills to discover new words and their meanings along with find an author's purpose.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.4a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### John's Bright Idea

by

**Content:** This is an old story. It was written 100 years ago. So you will find it has a different style from stories people read and write today. For example, you'll read that the children sell popcorn for 5 cents a bag and are thrilled. Today, that's not enough money to buy much.

Mrs. Meredith was a most kind and thoughtful woman. She spent a great deal of time visiting the poor. She knew they had problems. She wanted to help them. She brought food. She brought medicine, too.

The family lived in a small community with some people who were poor and others who were rich. In the town, some people worked but others had no jobs, and families needed money to pay their bills. Some families were poor because the parents had lost jobs, and the economy was in decline. People tried to help each other meet these challenges.

One morning she told her children about a family she had visited the day before. There was a man sick in bed, his wife, who took care of him and could not go out to work, and their little boy. The little boy--his name was Bernard--had interested her very much.

I wish you could see him, she said to her own children, John, Harry, and Clara, he is such a help to his mother. He wants very much to earn some money, but I don't see what he can do.

After their mother had left the room, the children sat thinking about Bernard. I wish we could help him to earn money, said Clara. His family is suffering so much.

So do I, said Harry. We really should do something to assist them.

For some moments, John said nothing, but, suddenly, he sprang to his feet and cried, I have a great idea! I have a solution that we can all help accomplish.

The other children also jumped up all attention. When John had an idea, it was sure to be a good one. I tell you what we can do, said John. You know that big box of corn Uncle John sent us for popping? Well, we can pop it, and put it into paper bags, and Bernard can take it around to the houses and sell it.

When Mrs. Meredith heard of John's idea, she, too, thought it a good one. Very soon, the children were busy popping the corn, while their mother went out to buy the paper bags. When she came back, she brought Bernard with her.

In a short time, he started out on his new business, and, much sooner than could be expected, returned with an empty basket. Tucked into one of his mittens were ten nickels. He had never earned so much money before in his life. When he found that it was all to be his, he was so delighted he could hardly speak, but his bright smiling face spoke for him. After he had run home to take the money to his mother, John said, We have corn enough left to send Bernard out ever so many times. May we do it again?

Yes, said Mrs. Meredith, you may send him every Saturday morning, if you will pop the corn for him yourselves. John, will you agree to take charge of the work?

Indeed I will, replied John, and he kept his word. For many weeks, every Saturday morning, no matter what opportunities there were to play, he saw that the corn was all popped, the paper bags filled, and arranged in the basket when Bernard arrived.

People began to watch for the little pop-corn boy, and every week he had at least fifty cents to take home, and often significantly more, income that supported his family. All of this was because of the way John carried out his bright idea.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** significantly **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** "...and every week he had at least fifty cents to take home, and often significantly more, income that supported his family..." What does the word "significantly" mean in this sentence?

- A: unimportant
- B: very important
- C: much greater
- D: effectively

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "significantly" correctly?

- A: Billy broke the significant news to Sarah
- B: Jane is Jack's significant other.
- C: Brittany knew significantly less about drums than Geoffrey.
- D: Wednesday was not a significant day for Sally.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** suffering **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** "His family is suffering so much." What does the word "suffering" mean in this sentence?

- A: having a great time
- B: in great emotional/physical pain
- C: eating lots of food
- D: sleeping in late

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "suffering" correctly?

- A: She has been suffering in the hospital since her car accident.
- B: Sean's relationship with Marina did suffer.
- C: She had to suffer the consequences of her actions.
- D: If he doesn't study, Brian's grades will suffer.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** economy **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** In the sentence, "families were poor because the parents had lost jobs, and the economy was in decline", what does the word "economy" mean?

- A: the world
- B: wealth of a community
- C: happiness
- D: the houses

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "economy" correctly?

- A: Joe drove an economy car.
- B: She sat in the economy seats on the plane.
- C: He received a large economy by regularly using coupons.
- D: The economy began to decline as the value of the U.S. dollar declined.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** income **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** In the phrase, "income that supported his family", what does the word "income" mean?

- A: food
- B: money stolen from a bank
- C: money earned through work
- D: a house

**Question:** Which of the following sentences uses the word "income" correctly?

- A: The baseball was incoming!
- B: She hung her income on the wall.
- C: Mary spent her monthly income on her bills.
- D: Every morning she drank one glass of income.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - John's Bright Idea

The title of this story is John's Bright Idea. Describe what exactly was John's Bright Idea. Use quotes to support your answer. What can John teach us about kindness?

### 2 - Why does Bernard do it?

Why does Bernard want to sell the popcorn? How do you know this? Use two examples from the story to support your answer.

### 3 - Background Information

The beginning of this story has a paragraph in italics that gives background information. Why does the author tell us this information??

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** You are to write and post here a 300 word essay on what the author is trying to teach us by sharing this story. What parts of the story tell you this? Cite the text to support your answer.

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