



## Getting Away With It

Peter loved reading and writing. Peter loved drawing, too. What did Peter *not* like? Math! All those numbers made his head spin. So what did Peter do? Nothing! He skipped his homework. And he doodled in his notebook as his teacher, Ms. Fife, demonstrated long division. In fact, the *only thing* that got Peter's attention in math class was when she said, "Don't forget about our BIG division test tomorrow." *Uh-oh*, gulped Peter. After class, Peter's math-wiz friend, Jill, noticed his worried expression.

"Do you want me to help you with long division?" she asked.

"No thanks," replied Peter with a false smile. "I can handle it."

That night, Peter sat down at the kitchen table with his math book wide open. But, before long, his mind slipped off the pages and into the comfortable zone of imagination. Peter doodled a flying sports car and a spooky wizard and a fire-breathing cow. The good news was that the drawings were great. The bad news was that Peter still didn't have a clue how to do long division.

The next day, Ms. Fife handed out the test. She instructed the students to write their answers on it and use scratch paper for calculations. Peter stared down at the first problem:  $12,015 \div 45 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ .

He squirmed. He bit his pencil. He peeked over at his friend Jill's paper.

Why he could see her answer! Quick as a wink, he scribbled 267 in the first blank.

What did he do after that? He copied the rest of Jill's answers and then turned in his test.

"How do you think you did?" asked Jill.

"Uh, pretty well, I think," muttered Peter.

And he was right. When he got his test back it had a big red *A* at the top along with a smiley face sticker—just like Jill's.

"Great work!" said Jill, "Guess you didn't need my help after all."

"Guess not," said Peter with a nervous grin. He couldn't believe it! He'd cheated on the test and actually gotten away with it!

That night, Peter's mom was so proud of his math-test grade that she made his favorite meal: spaghetti and meatballs. But his stomach hurt too much to eat. Peter's dad was also thrilled, so he said Peter could play a video game for a whole hour. But Peter felt too sick to play. He even felt too sick to doodle. So Peter went off to bed early and drifted into a dark dream about a spooky wizard. The wizard waved his magic wand and chanted:

*Cheater, Cheater, Pumpkin Eater.  
I cast a spell upon you, Peter.  
You fooled your parents and Jill and Ms. Fife,  
But you'll feel guilty for the rest of your life!*

When Peter woke up, he was drenched in sweat. He looked around, relieved that the wizard was just a figment of his imagination. Still, he felt absolutely awful. He'd cheated on the math test, and it seemed like he'd gotten away with it. But did he really get away with it? He still didn't know how to do long division and that was a skill he would actually need. Plus, he felt guilty. He felt ashamed. And he felt so very sorry for his terrible mistake. There was only one way to make things right.

"Mom!" he yelled from his bed. "Come quick! I need to tell you something VERY important..."



**THEME:** The main idea or message of a story. Themes can be conveyed by title, setting, and symbols. They can also be conveyed by how characters act, change, learn, and/or grow. Some stories have more than one theme.



Here are some popular fiction themes.

**Be true to your own values.**

**Family loyalty is very important.**

**Appearances can be deceptive.**

**Hard work builds character.**

**Courage comes from facing down fears.**

**True friends stick together when times get tough.**

**Differences make people special.**

### Key Questions

1. At the end of the story, what do you think Peter is going to tell his mother? Why do you think so? What life lesson did he learn?
2. What is the theme of this story? Investigate the text, underlining evidence, then state the theme in a complete sentence below.

**The theme of Getting Away With It is...**

3. Why do you think the author chose this particular theme? Do you think it is a worthwhile message to share with readers?
4. What connections can you make between your own life and the story's theme?

**S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question:** Think about your favorite books. What are the themes of each one? Make a list.

**The Write Stuff**

Choose one of the themes from the box above. Then write a mini-story to support that important message.



# Answer Key



## THEME: Getting Away With It

**Key Questions:** **1.** Answers will vary, but should approximate: He is going to tell her that he cheated on the math test. He learned that cheating is a bad idea because it made him feel guilty and he didn't learn the math. **2.** Answers will vary, but should approximate: Honesty is the best policy; or there are consequences for cheating even when you seem to get away with it. **3.** Answers will vary, but should approximate: The author wanted to communicate to readers that honesty is the best policy. **4.** Answers will vary.

**S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question:** Answers will vary.

**TIP:** No two readers interpret a story—including its characters, plot, setting, tone, or imagery—exactly the same way.

For that reason, it's wise to invite differing opinions and healthy debate in the context of your literacy lessons.

# Common Core State Standards Correlation

This lesson and activity will help you meet many of the reading and language arts standards recommended in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Listed below are the specific CCSS Reading Standards for Literature (RL) addressed in this lesson at each grade level. For more information about the CCSS, visit [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

## Literary Element



### THEME

<b>RL.3.1:</b> Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
<b>RL.3.3:</b> Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
<b>RL.4.1:</b> Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
<b>RL.4.2:</b> Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from the details in the text.
<b>RL.4.9:</b> Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.
<b>RL.5.1:</b> Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
<b>RL.5.2:</b> Determine the theme of a story, drama, or poem from the details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges.
<b>RL.6.1:</b> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
<b>RL.6.2:</b> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions and details.