

Decoding Goodness Answer Key

Sample Responses

1. **Marcus's Actions:** He notices someone in need and chooses to help without expecting anything in return, showing empathy and compassion.
2. **Author's Message:** *Small acts of kindness can make a big difference in someone's life, and in your own.*
3. **Why It Matters:** The story reminds readers that in a fast-paced and often disconnected world, small gestures like sharing food or offering company can bring comfort, connection, and hope.
4. **Extension Line Example:** *"Sometimes, one simple act of kindness can feed more than just hunger—it can feed the heart."*

Teacher Notes / Guide

Objective: Students will infer the **author's message (theme)** by analyzing the character's actions, dialogue, and the resolution of the story. This helps students recognize how fiction often conveys **universal lessons about empathy and human goodness**.

Teaching Tips:

- Begin with a class discussion on what "the power of kindness" means.
- Encourage students to highlight or annotate **key moments** where Marcus's choices reveal his values.
- Remind students that the author's message should be phrased as a **universal truth**, not a summary of events (e.g., say *"Kindness spreads,"* not *"Marcus was kind"*).

Extension Ide: Have students write a brief personal reflection titled *"A Time Kindness Changed My Day."*