

Name _____

Trophies And Truths Answer Key

Sample Responses

1. **Title Reflection:** The title connects to Carlos's realization that winning can come with emotional or moral consequences. His victory felt hollow once he understood what he sacrificed: his friend's well-being and his own integrity.
2. **Character Change:** At first, Carlos values speed and victory above all else. By the end, he learns that compassion and loyalty mean more than trophies or medals.
3. **Thematic Analysis:** The story reveals that success gained without empathy or honor leaves one feeling empty rather than fulfilled.
4. **Theme Statement (Sample):** *True victory comes from integrity and compassion, not from crossing the finish line first.*

Teacher Notes / Guide

Objective: Students will learn to identify **theme** by analyzing how a story's **title** reflects its deeper message.

Teaching Tips:

- Begin with a discussion: Ask students what "The Cost of Winning" might mean before reading; write predictions on the board.
- After reading, revisit those predictions and ask how their understanding evolved.
- Emphasize that "cost" can mean **emotional**, **ethical**, or **relational** consequences, and not just financial ones.
- Encourage students to brainstorm **alternate titles** (e.g., "The Hollow Trophy," "A Race Too Far") and discuss how each would change the focus of the theme.

Extension Idea: Have students write a brief reflection - *Describe a time when success or achievement came with an unexpected cost.*