Read the short story. Then answer each question.

The Whistle

Two hundred years ago in Boston, there lived a little boy whose name was Benjamin Franklin.

On the day that he was seven years old, his mother gave him a few pennies.

He looked at the bright, yellow pieces and said, "What shall I do with these coppers, Mother?"

It was the first money that he had ever had.

"You may buy something if you wish," said his mother.

"And then will you give me more?" he asked.

His mother shook her head and said, "No, Benjamin. I cannot give you any more. So you must be careful not to spend your money foolishly."
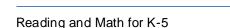
The little fellow ran into the street. He heard the pennies jingle in his pocket. How rich he was!

Boston is now a great city, but, at that time, it was only a little town.

There were not many stores.

As Benjamin ran down the street, he wondered what he should buy. Should he buy candy? He hardly knew how it tasted. Should he buy a pretty toy? He did not own a toy. In his family there were fourteen boys and girls older than he and two little sisters who were younger.

What a big family it was! Their father was a poor man. No wonder the lad had never owned a toy.

Benjamin had not gone far when he met an older boy who was blowing a whistle.

"I wish I had that whistle," he said.

The older boy looked at him and blew it again. Oh, what a pretty sound it made!

"I have some pennies," said Benjamin. He held them in his hand, and showed them to the boy. "You may have them if you will give me the whistle."

"All of them?"

"Yes, all of them."

"Well, it's a deal," said the boy, and he gave the whistle to Benjamin and took the pennies.

Little Benjamin Franklin was very happy, for he was only seven years old. He ran home as fast as he could, blowing the whistle as he ran.

"See, Mother," he said, "I have bought a whistle."

"How much did you pay for it?"

"All the pennies you gave me."

"Oh, Benjamin!"

One of his brothers asked to see the whistle.

"Well, well," his brother said, "you've paid a dear price for this thing. It's only a penny whistle, and a poor one at that."

"You might have bought half a dozen such whistles with the money I gave you," said his mother.

The little boy saw what a mistake he had made. The whistle did not please him anymore. He threw it upon the floor and began to cry.

"Never mind, my child," said his mother very kindly. "You are only a very little boy, and you will learn a great deal as you grow bigger. The lesson you have learned today is never to pay too dear for a whistle."

Benjamin Franklin lived to be a very old man, but he never forgot that lesson.

Every boy and girl should remember the name of Benjamin Franklin. He was a great thinker and a great doer, and he helped to make our country free. His life was such that no man could ever say, "Ben Franklin has wronged me."

Questions:

1.   Why had Benjamin never owned a toy before?

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2.   Why was the mother disappointed Benjamin bought the whistle?

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3.   What did Benjamin learn from his mistake?

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4.   Why did the boy with the whistle tell Benjamin it was a "bargain"?

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Answers:

1. Why had Benjamin never owned a toy before?
   Benjamin's family was poor so they could not afford toys.

2. Why was the mother disappointed Benjamin bought the whistle?
   Benjamin's mother was disappointed that he had paid too much for the whistle.

3. What did Benjamin learn from his mistake?
   Benjamin learned not to wrong anyone.

4. Why did the boy with the whistle tell Benjamin it was a "bargain"?
   The boy with the whistle was greedy and wanted Benjamin's money.