

Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates

by Mary Mapes Dodge

American author Mary Mapes Dodge wrote Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates in 1865. It's the story of a Dutch boy Hans Brinker and his family. The family is very poor. Hans and his sister, Gretel, are excellent ice skaters. They want to take part in a race to win silver skates, but their homemade wooden skates aren't good enough for them to win. In this passage, a wealthy young girl has given Hans some money. The children try to decide how to spend the money.

Hans and Gretel Find a Friend

Hans shook his head. "The young lady would have given us the money to buy skates, but if I EARN it, Gretel, it shall be spent for wool. You must have a warm jacket."

"Oh!" cried Gretel in real dismay, "not buy the skates? Why, I am not often cold! Mother says the blood runs up and down in poor children's veins, humming, 'I must keep 'em warm! I must keep 'em warm.'"

"Oh, Hans," she continued with something like a sob, "don't say you won't buy the skates. It makes me feel just like crying. Besides, I want to be cold. I mean, I'm real, awful warm—so now!"

Hans looked up hurriedly. He had a true Dutch horror or tears, or emotion of any kind, and most of all, he dreaded to see his sisters' blue eyes overflowing.

"Now, mind," cried Gretel, seeing her advantage, "I'll feel awful if you give up the skates. I don't want them. I'm not so stingy as that; but I want YOU to have them, and then when I get bigger, they'll do for me—oh—count the pieces, Hans. Did you ever see so many?"

Hans turned the money thoughtfully in his palm. Never in all his life had he longed so intensely for a pair of skates, for he had known of the race and had fairly ached for a chance to test his powers with the other children. He felt confident that with a good pair of steel runners he could readily outdistance most of the boys on the canal. Then, too, Gretel's argument was plausible. On the other hand, he knew that she, with her strong but lithe little frame, needed but a week's practice on good runners to make her a better skater than Rychie

Korbes or even Katrinka Flack. As soon as this last thought flashed upon him, his resolve was made. If Gretel would not have the jacket, she should have the skates.

"No, Gretel," he answered at last, "I can wait. Someday I may have money enough saved to buy a fine pair. You shall have these."

Gretel's eyes sparkled, but in another instant she insisted, rather faintly, "The young lady gave the money to YOU, Hans. I'd be real bad to take it."

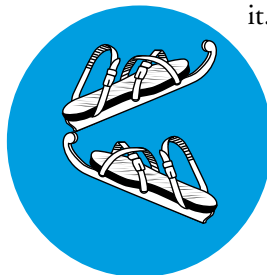
Hans shook his head resolutely as he trudged on, causing his sister to half skip and half walk in her effort to keep beside him. By this time they had taken off their wooden "rockers" and were hastening home to tell their mother the good news.

"Oh! I know!" cried Gretel in a sprightly tone. "You can do this. You can get a pair a little too small for you, and too big for me, and we can take turns and use them. Won't that be fine?" Gretel clapped her hands again.

Poor Hans! This was a strong temptation, but he pushed it away from him, brave-hearted fellow that he was.

"Nonsense, Gretel. You could never get on with a big pair. You stumbled about with these, like a blind chicken, before I curved off the ends. No, you must have a pair to fit exactly, and you must practice every chance you can get, until the twentieth comes. My little Gretel shall win the silver skates."

Gretel could not help laughing with delight at the very idea.



Name: _____

Hans Brinker: Do You Remember?

I. Fill in the Blank

Write the correct answer in the blank.

1. Gretel tells Hans she doesn't need a jacket because she isn't _____ very often.
2. The homemade skates the children wore were made of _____ .
3. A young lady had given Hans _____ .
4. Hans decides that _____ should have the new skates.

II. Compare and Contrast the Characters

In the space below, compare the characters, Hans and Gretel, from the passage. On the left side, write ways they are different. On the right side, list ways they are the same or similar.

Different

Same

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

Hans Brinker

Vocabulary Words

Name: _____

I. Write a Sentence

Below are phrases from the passage. Synonyms for the underlined words are after the phrase. Write a new sentence in the space after under phrase, using the underlined word.

1. Never in all his life had he longed so intensely for a pair of skates..." Synonym: strongly

2. "...with a good pair of steel runners he could readily outdistance..." Synonym: beat; outdo

3. "Hans shook his head resolutely as he trudged on..." Synonym: walked heavily; marched

4. "...he dreaded to see his sisters' blue eyes overflowing..." Synonym: spilling over

II. Working with Antonyms and Synonyms

Below are quotations from *Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates*. One word is underlined in each quotation. After the sentence is an antonym for the word. Based on the context of the sentence and the antonym, circle the correct letter for a synonym of the underlined word.

1. "I'm not so stingy as that..." Antonym: generous

A. cheap B. rich C. stupid D. silly

2. "Oh!" cried Gretel in real dismay..." Antonym: happiness

A. confusion B. surprise C. dismay D. joy

3. "...with her strong but lithe little frame..." Antonym: awkward

A. short B. nimble C. clumsy D. twisted

4. "Oh! I know!" cried Gretel in a sprightly tone." Antonym: dull

A. quiet B. mad C. lively D. loving

5. "Gretel's argument was plausible." Antonym: unlikely

A. dumb B. mixed up C. impossible D. believable

6. "hastening home..." Antonym: going slowly

A. rushing B. walking C. hopping D. crawling

Name: _____

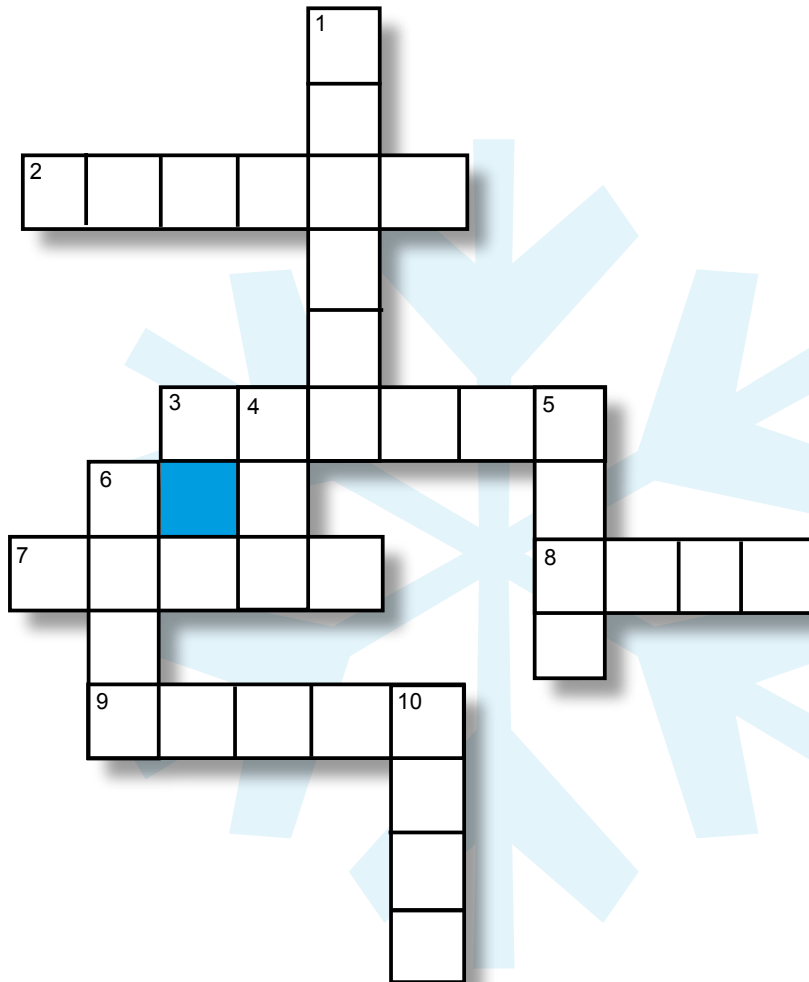
Hans Brinker: What's the Main Idea?

Write the main idea of the passage in the square box. Find three supporting points from the story and write them in the ovals.

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graph TD; A[ ] --- B([ ]); A --- C([ ]); A --- D([ ])
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Name: _____

Hans Brinker Crossword Puzzle Fun



Across

- 2. A short coat
- 3. The children wanted to win these type of skates.
- 7. A young lady gave Hans some _____.
- 8. Antonym of hot
- 9. Name for people from the Netherlands

Down

- 1. Hans' sister in the story
- 4. Frozen water
- 5. A speed competition
- 6. The children's skates were made of this.
- 10. The boy in the story

Name: _____ **KEY**

Hans Brinker: Do You Remember?

I. Fill in the Blank

Write the correct answer in the blank.

1. Gretel tells Hans she doesn't need a jacket because she isn't **cold** very often.
2. The homemade skates the children wore were made of **wood**.
3. A young lady had given Hans **money**.
4. Hans decides that **Gretel** should have the new skates.

II. Compare and Contrast the Characters

In the space below, compare the characters, Hans and Gretel, from the passage. On the left side, write ways they are different. On the right side, list ways they are the same or similar.

Student's answers will vary. Examples of correct answers:

Different

Same

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Hans is more responsible because he wants to use the money for Gretel's coat. | 1. Both want the other one to have the skates. |
| 2. Hans doesn't like tears, but Gretel cries easily. | 2. The both think the other can win the race. |
| 3. Hans makes the decisions, Gretel doesn't. | 3. Both are good skaters. |

Hans Brinker

Vocabulary Words

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Student's choice

2. "...with a good pair of steel runners he could readily outdistance..." Synonym: beat; outdo
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4. "...he dreaded to see his sisters' blue eyes overflowing..." Synonym: spilling over
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Name: _____ **KEY**

Hans Brinker: What's the Main Idea?

Write the main idea of the passage in the square box. Find three supporting points from the story and write them in the ovals.

Example of correct answers:

Hans thinks Gretel should have the skates.

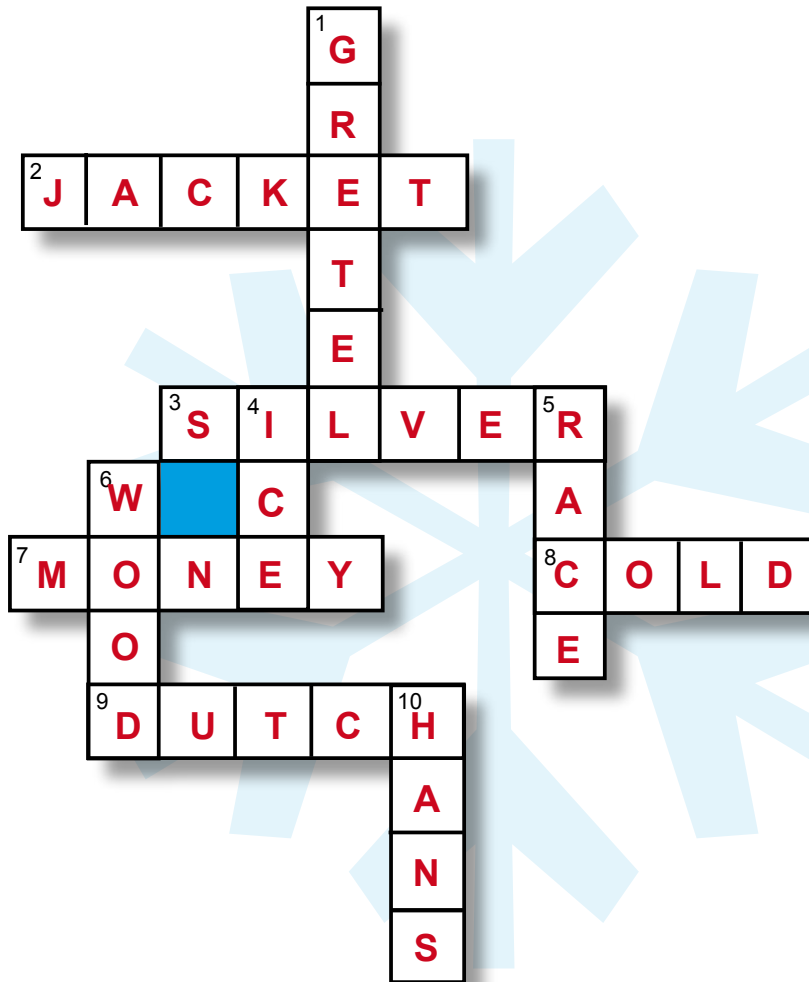
...he knew that she, with her strong but lithe little frame, needed but a week's practice on good runners to make her a better skater

"No, you must have a pair to fit exactly, and you must practice every chance you can get"

"If Gretel would not have the jacket, she should have the skates."

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