**Theme**

**Directions:** Determine what the theme is for each story and explain your answer. Remember, a theme is a lesson or message in the story.

Write in complete sentences.

1. Alan had very few responsibilities, but one of them was to clean his room. It did not take long, but Alan still didn't like doing it. One day Alan thought of a way to save some time. Rather than putting everything neatly back in its place, he decided to just throw all the stuff on the floor into his closet. His mom would think that he had cleaned his room, and it would only take a fraction of the time. Alan was pleased with himself for thinking of this brilliant idea. He figured that this would save a lot of time and energy. The next time his room got messy, he piled everything up in the closet and the pile grew. It grew and grew. Then Alan's friend Steve called. "Alan, everyone is playing baseball at the park. Do you want to play too?" Alan loved baseball. "That sounds great, Steve. I'll be right there." Alan went to grab his baseball mitt when he realized that it wasn't in its usual place. Alan thought to himself, I guess it's in the closet. When he opened up the closet door, he was faced with a huge, unnavigable mess, some of which poured out as he opened the door. Alan began digging through the pile in a frantic attempt to find his mitt. He dug and dug, and as he dug his room got messier and messier. Soon his room was the messiest that it had ever been, and he still hadn't found his mitt. Alan sighed in despair. By the time he found his mitt, the boys had long concluded their game and Alan had hours of cleaning ahead of him before he'd be allowed to leave.

**What is the theme of the story?**

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

2. It was Sean's first day at a new high school. Most of the students had been nice to him, until he got into gym class. The coach had assigned two captains, Mike and Malik, and they were picking teams from the boys in Sean's class. As Mike and Malik made their picks, it became pretty clear to Sean who was popular and who was not. Since Sean was short for his age, Mike and Malik just assumed that Sean could not play basketball. As Mike and Malik's choices dwindled, Sean still remained amongst an ever-slimming pool of struggling athletes. Now there were only two students left: Sean and another kid who seemed nice but was reading a book. Mike and Malik joked about who was going to get stuck with whom, and then Mike made his last pick. It was not Sean. Sean sighed and reluctantly joined Malik's team. As soon as the game began, Mike became aware of the error that he had made. Sean quickly stole the ball from him and ran it back for a layup. "The new kid got lucky," Mike remarked, but it soon became clear that Sean had more going for him than luck. What Sean lacked in height, he made up for in speed, and he continued to dominate the action on the court for the remainder of the game. With Sean's blazing speed and crazy crossovers, Malik's team devastated Mike's, and that was the only time that Sean would be last pick at that high school.

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3. Blaine opened up the present and began pouting. He screamed in a high-pitched voice, "This is Captain Thunder! I wanted Captain Lightning!" His mother looked at him with dismay and handed him another present, which he greedily opened. "Why did you get me a red hat? You know I like blue more," Blaine whined as he threw the hat across the room. His mother straightened her expression and squinted at him. Earlier she had hoped to take some pictures of this moment, but by now she had put away her camera. She sighed and handed him one more present in hopes that this year wouldn't be a total bust. Blaine huffed and opened it. "A Game Box 4000… wow. Where's the Game Box 5000 that I asked for?" His mother could bear his ingratitude no longer. The next time that Blaine returned from his father's house, he was shocked to find that all of these toys and gifts, along with many other of his things, had been generously donated to needy children.

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4. In his sophomore year of high school, Michael Jordan tried out for the varsity basketball team at Laney High School in Wilmington, North Carolina. But at five feet and eleven inches tall, the coach believed that Jordan was too short to play at that level, so Jordan was cut from the team. Jordan didn’t let this obstacle defeat him. In fact, it pushed him to work even harder. He trained vigorously and grew another four inches the following summer. When he finally made the varsity squad, Jordan averaged 25 points a game and went on to become one of the greatest basketball players in history.

**What is the theme of the story?**

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5. Elsa and Sam were both students in Mr. Morton’s reading class. Mr. Morton wasn’t too strict about deadlines, and Sam took advantage of that. He did all of his homework in his other classes but never bothered to complete Mr. Morton’s reading assignments, figuring that he could complete them later. Elsa, on the other hand, completed each assignment Mr. Morton assigned the night that he assigned it. She had to stay up a little later, but she didn’t want to get a penalty for turning in her reading work late. Elsa knew reading was a core subject and that she had to keep “C” average for the entire year or she would have to go to summer school. When the end of semester came, Elsa and Sam had both planned on going to the Six Flags amusement park, but Mr. Morton called Sam’s mother, and she grounded Sam until he turned in all of his work. That weekend was horrible for Sam. He stayed up until 2:00 AM each night and still couldn’t complete all of the assignments. Meanwhile, Elsa had a great time at Six flags, watching movies late at night, and enjoying her weekend free of stress and pressure. At the end of the semester, Sam was lucky to squeak by with a “C” minus in reading while Elsa earned an “A.” Sammy still hasn’t learned his lesson and probably won’t complete this activity either.

**What is the theme of the story?**

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