ANSWER KEY > The Scholarship Jacket

by Marta Salinas ● 1986

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies a major theme of this story?   `RL.KID.2`

    A.   It is best to focus on one's education without worrying about recognition.
    B.   Being an American means acting with respect for hard work and justice.
    C.   One should respect the wisdom of elders when solving problems.
    D.   It is difficult but important to stand up for what is fair and right.

2. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?   `RL.KID.1`

    A.   "I had been a straight A student since the first grade and this last year had looked forward very much to owning that jacket." (Paragraph 2)
    B.   "My father was a farm laborer who couldn't earn enough money to feed eight children, so when I was six I was given to my grandparents to raise." (Paragraph 2)
    C.   "It was more than just being a valedictorian and giving a little thank you speech for the jacket on graduation night. It represented eight years of hard work and expectation." (Paragraph 15)
    D.   "'Then if you pay for it, Marta, it's not a scholarship jacket, is it? Tell your principal I will not pay the fifteen dollars.'" (Paragraph 19)

3. In paragraph 8 and paragraph 10, why is it significant that the principal cannot look Marta in the eyes?   `RL.KID.3`

    A.   It reveals that he knows what he is doing is wrong, and he is ashamed.
    B.   It reveals that he is blind to justice and does not believe he is doing anything wrong.
    C.   It reveals that he is actually distracted by more important things than who gets the jacket.
    D.   It reveals that he doesn't care about what the scholarship jacket means to Marta.

4. How do Marta's feelings change over the course of the story? Cite evidence from at least 3 examples in the story.   `RL.KID.3`

    Answers will vary; students should identify examples that reveal how Marta's feelings shift throughout the story from hurt and victimized, to anxious, to dignified, and finally to triumphant. At the beginning of the story, when Marta first finds out she may not get the scholarship jacket, she is hurt and upset, feeling "shock" (Paragraph 4) and a "pounding in [her] ears" (Paragraph 7) as "a small sound of dismay escaped [her] throat" (Paragraph 10). When Marta must tell her grandfather about her predicament, Salinas' word choice reveals Marta's anxiety – her "eyes were red and puffy" (Paragraph 12), her hands are shaking, and her "words came out in an eager rush" (Paragraph 16). When Marta gets the answer she dreads from her grandfather, she feels dismayed, but is determined to appear strong and dignified by sitting straight and refusing to cry even though she can "feel [her] heart pounding loudly" while "something bitter and vile tasting was coming up in [her] mouth" (Paragraph 29). When she Marta gets the justice she deserves, she feels triumphantly "as tall as the sky" (Paragraph 31).

5. How does the principal's point of view towards Marta change throughout the story? Cite evidence from the story in your response.   `RL.CS.6`

    Answers will vary; students should describe how the principal shifts from being blind and uncaring about Marta's suffering early in the story to more sympathetic with Marta by the end of the story. When the principal first meets Marta to tell her about the new rule to pay $15 for the scholarship jacket, he does not meet Marta's eyes because he is embarrassed and uncomfortable, since he knows what he is doing is wrong (Paragraphs 8-10). At the next meeting, when he asks why her grandfather won't just pay for the jacket, and Marta tells him "'if I had to pay for it, then it wouldn't be a scholarship jacket,'" he softens (Paragraph 27). He suddenly sees Marta as a fair-minded and deserving student and decides sympathetically and fairly to "make an exception" and revoke his own rule (Paragraph 30).