

Lesson in Literature . . .

BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS

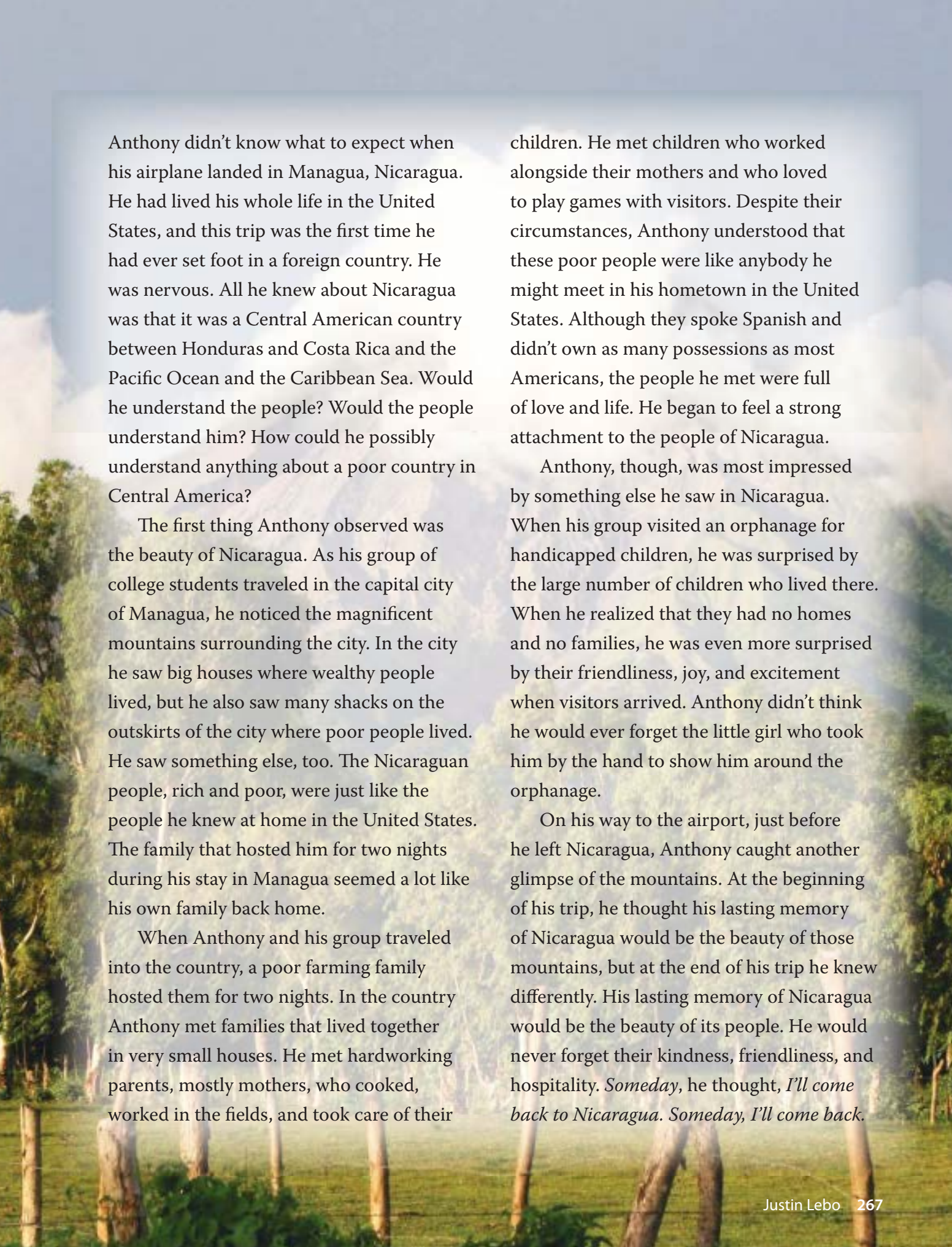
POINT OF VIEW

- A story's point of view depends on who is telling the story.
- Sometimes a story is told from the narrator's point of view.
- Most nonfiction works are written from the narrator's point of view.
- In works of fiction, a story may be told from a character's point of view.

THINK ABOUT IT!

1. Is this story told only through a narrator, or is dialogue used to reveal some of the plot?
2. In the second paragraph, we learn how Anthony felt about his host family. Write two sentences to describe Anthony's visit from the point of view of the host family.
3. In your opinion, do the narrator and Anthony have the same point of view? Explain your answer.





Anthony didn't know what to expect when his airplane landed in Managua, Nicaragua. He had lived his whole life in the United States, and this trip was the first time he had ever set foot in a foreign country. He was nervous. All he knew about Nicaragua was that it was a Central American country between Honduras and Costa Rica and the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Would he understand the people? Would the people understand him? How could he possibly understand anything about a poor country in Central America?

The first thing Anthony observed was the beauty of Nicaragua. As his group of college students traveled in the capital city of Managua, he noticed the magnificent mountains surrounding the city. In the city he saw big houses where wealthy people lived, but he also saw many shacks on the outskirts of the city where poor people lived. He saw something else, too. The Nicaraguan people, rich and poor, were just like the people he knew at home in the United States. The family that hosted him for two nights during his stay in Managua seemed a lot like his own family back home.

When Anthony and his group traveled into the country, a poor farming family hosted them for two nights. In the country Anthony met families that lived together in very small houses. He met hardworking parents, mostly mothers, who cooked, worked in the fields, and took care of their

children. He met children who worked alongside their mothers and who loved to play games with visitors. Despite their circumstances, Anthony understood that these poor people were like anybody he might meet in his hometown in the United States. Although they spoke Spanish and didn't own as many possessions as most Americans, the people he met were full of love and life. He began to feel a strong attachment to the people of Nicaragua.

Anthony, though, was most impressed by something else he saw in Nicaragua. When his group visited an orphanage for handicapped children, he was surprised by the large number of children who lived there. When he realized that they had no homes and no families, he was even more surprised by their friendliness, joy, and excitement when visitors arrived. Anthony didn't think he would ever forget the little girl who took him by the hand to show him around the orphanage.

On his way to the airport, just before he left Nicaragua, Anthony caught another glimpse of the mountains. At the beginning of his trip, he thought his lasting memory of Nicaragua would be the beauty of those mountains, but at the end of his trip he knew differently. His lasting memory of Nicaragua would be the beauty of its people. He would never forget their kindness, friendliness, and hospitality. *Someday, he thought, I'll come back to Nicaragua. Someday, I'll come back.*

Blueprint for Reading

INTO . . . *Justin Lebo*

What does it mean to be *selfless*? The suffix *-less* means “without,” or “not having.” *Careless* means without care. *Hopeless* means without hope. *Selfless* means without self, without thinking of *yourself*. When you are *selfless*, you put someone or something before yourself. The *someone* may be a friend, a parent, or anyone who needs your help. The *something* may be an organization that needs your support. But being *selfless* does not mean that you give everything and get nothing. As you read, see if you can understand what Justin gained from being *selfless* and giving.



Point of View

A birthday party was held at the home of four-year-old Brian Melton. When his father came home, Brian ran to the door and said, “Daddy! You missed all the fun! A bottle of red soda exploded when we opened it and got all over everything! The kids said it was the best party ever!” When Mr. Melton walked into the kitchen, Mrs. Melton said, “Jim, this was the worst birthday party I have ever given! A bottle of red soda exploded and ruined my carpet.” As Mrs. Melton was sighing, Brian’s older sister, Joannie, walked in looking bored. “Mom, I don’t know how you put up with those little kids. All they do is eat and run around.” Mr. Melton wrinkled his brow. He couldn’t figure it out. It sounded as though there had been three different parties in his house: an exciting one, a terrible one, and a boring one! Which one was it?

The answer is, of course, that the party was all three—exciting, terrible, and boring—depending on your **point of view**. Your *point of view* is the way you look at a situation. As you read *Justin Lebo*, see if you can identify the point of view from which the story is being told.

WORD BANK

battered (BAT erd) *adj.*: damaged by rough and careless treatment
passion (PASH un) *n.*: an enthusiasm for something



JUSTIN LEBO

PHILLIP HOOSE



Something about the battered old bicycle at the garage sale caught ten-year-old Justin Lebo's eye. What a wreck! It was like looking at a few big bones in the dust and trying to figure out what kind of dinosaur they had once belonged to.

It was a BMX bike with a twenty-inch frame. Its original color was buried beneath five or six coats of gunky paint. Now it showed up as sort of a rusted red. Everything—the grips, the pedals, the brakes, the seat, the spokes—were bent or broken, twisted and rusted. Justin stood back as if he were inspecting a painting for sale at an auction. Then he made his final judgment: perfect.

Justin talked the owner down to \$6.50 and asked his mother, Diane, to help him load the bike into the back of their car.

When he got it home he wheeled the junker into the garage and showed it proudly to his father. “Will you help me fix it up?” he asked. Justin's hobby was bike racing, a passion the two of them shared. Their



garage barely had room for the car anymore. It was more like a bike shop. Tires and frames hung from hooks on the ceiling, and bike wrenches dangled from the walls.

After every race, Justin and his father would adjust the brakes and realign the wheels of his two racing bikes. This was a lot of work, since Justin raced flat out, challenging every gear and part to perform to its fullest. He had learned to handle almost every repair his father could and maybe even a few things he couldn't. When Justin got really stuck, he went to see Mel, the owner of the best bike shop in town. Mel let him hang out and watch, and he even grunted a few syllables of advice from between the spokes of a wheel now and then.

WORD BANK

realign (REE uh LYN) *v.*:
to return to their proper
position

Now Justin and his father cleared out a work space in the garage and put the old junker up on a rack. They poured alcohol on the frame and rubbed until the old paint began to yield, layer by layer. They replaced the broken pedal, tightened down a new seat, and restored the grips. In about a week, it looked brand new.

Justin wheeled it out of the garage, leapt aboard, and started off around the block. He stood up and mashed down on the pedals, straining for speed.

It was a good, steady ride, but not much of a thrill compared to his racers.



Soon he forgot about the bike. But the very next week, he bought another junker at a yard sale and fixed it up, too. After a while it bothered him that he wasn't really using either bike. Then he realized that what he loved about the old bikes wasn't riding them: it was the challenge of making something new and useful out of something old and broken.

Justin wondered what he should do with them. They were just taking up space in the garage. He remembered that when he was younger, he used to live near a large brick building called the Kilbarchan Home for Boys. It was a place for boys whose parents couldn't care for them for one reason or another.

He found "Kilbarchan" in the phone book and called the director, who said the boys would be thrilled to get two bicycles. The next day when Justin and his mother unloaded the bikes at the home, two boys raced out to greet them. They leapt aboard the bikes and started tooling around the semicircular driveway, doing wheelies and pirouettes, laughing and shouting.



WORD BANK

tooling (TOOL ing) *v.*: driving or riding in a vehicle
semicircular (SEM ee SUR kyuh lur) *adj.*: shaped like half of a circle
pirouettes (PEER oo ETS) *n.*: a dance step in which the dancer whirls about on one foot



The Lebos watched them for a while, then started to climb into their car to go home. The boys cried after them, “Wait a minute! You forgot your bikes!” Justin explained that the bikes were for them to keep. “They were so happy,” Justin remembers. It was like they couldn’t believe it. It made me feel good just to see them happy.”

On the way home, Justin was silent. His mother assumed he was lost in a feeling of satisfaction. But he was thinking about what would happen once those bikes got wheeled inside and everyone saw them. How would all those kids decide who got the bikes? Two bikes could cause more trouble than they would solve. Actually, they hadn’t been that hard to build. It was fun. Maybe he could do more...

“Mom,” Justin said as they turned onto their street, “I’ve got an idea. I’m going to make a bike for every boy at Kilbarchan for the holidays.” Diane Lebo looked at Justin out of the corner of her eye. She had rarely seen him so determined.

When they got home, Justin called Kilbarchan to find out how many boys lived there. There were twenty-one. It was already June. He had six months to make nineteen bikes. That was almost a bike a week. Justin called the home back to tell them of his plan. “I could tell they didn’t think I could do it,” Justin remembers. “I knew I could.”

Justin knew his best chance was to build bikes almost the way GM or Ford builds cars: in an assembly line.¹ He would start with frames from three-speed, twenty-four-inch BMX bicycles. They were common bikes, and all the parts were interchangeable. If he could find enough decent frames, he could take parts off broken bikes and fasten them onto the good frames. He figured it would take three or four junkers to produce enough parts to make one good bike. That meant sixty to eighty bikes. Where would he get them?

WORD BANK

interchangeable (IN tur CHAYNGE uh bul) *adj.*: two things that can be used in place of one another
proposal (pruh PO zul) *n.*: a suggested plan
gingerly (JIN jur lee) *adv.*: with great care

1. In an *assembly line*, a product is manufactured piece by piece. As each part of the product is made, it is passed to the next worker, who adds the next piece to it, and so on, until the entire product is completed.

Garage sales seemed to be the only hope. It was June, and there would be garage sales all summer long. But even if he could find that many bikes, how could he ever pay for them? That was hundreds of dollars.

He went to his parents with a proposal. “When Justin was younger, say five or six,” says his mother, “he used to give some of his allowance away to help others in need. His father and I would donate a dollar for every dollar Justin donated. So he asked us if it could be like the old days, if we’d match every dollar he put into buying old bikes. We said yes.”

Justin and his mother spent most of June and July hunting for cheap bikes at garage sales and thrift shops. They would haul the bikes home, and Justin would start stripping them down in the yard.

But by the beginning of August, he had managed to make only ten bikes. Summer vacation was almost over, and school and homework would soon cut into his time. Garage sales would dry up when it got colder, and Justin was out of money. Still, he was determined to find a way.

At the end of August, Justin got a break. A neighbor wrote a letter to the local newspaper describing Justin’s project, and an editor thought it would make a good story. One day a reporter entered the Lebo garage. Stepping gingerly through the tires and frames that covered the floor, she found a boy with cut fingers and dirty nails,



banging a seat onto a frame. His clothes were covered with grease. In her admiring article about a boy who was devoting his summer to help kids he didn't even know, she said Justin needed bikes and money, and she printed his home phone number.

Overnight, everything changed. "There must have been a hundred calls," Justin says. "People would call me up and ask me to come over and pick up their old bike. Or I'd be working in the garage, and a station wagon would pull up. The driver would leave a couple of bikes by the curb. It just snowballed."

By the start of school, the garage was overflowing with BMX frames. Pyramids of pedals and seats rose in the corners. Soon bike parts filled a toolshed in the backyard and then spilled out into the small yard itself, wearing away the lawn.

More and more writers and radio reporters called for interviews. Each time he told his story, Justin asked for bikes and money. "The first few interviews were fun," Justin says, "but it reached a point where I really didn't like doing them. The



publicity was necessary, though. I had to keep doing interviews to get the donations I needed.”

By the time school opened, he was working on ten bikes at a time. There were so many calls now that he was beginning to refuse offers that weren’t the exact bikes he needed.

As checks came pouring in, Justin’s money problems disappeared. He set up a bank account and began to make bulk orders of common parts from Mel’s bike shop. Mel seemed delighted to see him. Sometimes, if Justin brought a bike by the shop, Mel would help him fix it. When Justin tried to talk him into a lower price for big orders, Mel smiled and gave in. He respected another good businessman. They became friends.

The week before the holidays Justin delivered the last of the twenty-one bikes to Kilbarchan. Once again, the boys poured out of the home and leapt aboard the bikes, tearing around the snow.

And once again, their joy inspired Justin. They reminded him how important bikes were to him. Wheels meant freedom. He

WORD BANK

inspired (in SPY ehrd) *v.*:
filled with a sense of purpose



thought how much more the freedom to ride must mean to boys like these who had so little freedom in their lives. He decided to keep on building.

“First I made eleven bikes for the children in a foster home my mother told me about. Then I made bikes for all the women in a homeless shelter. Then I made ten little bikes and tricycles for the kids in a home for sick children. Then I made twenty-three bikes for the Paterson Housing Coalition.”

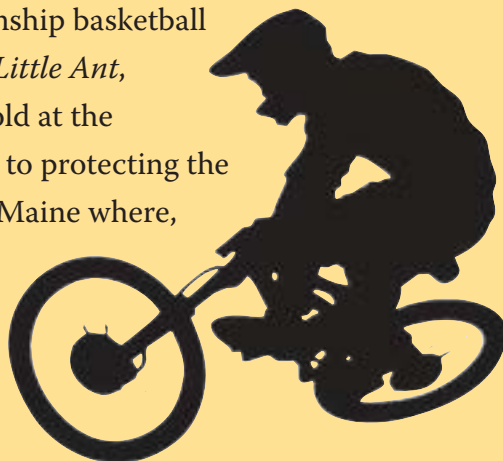
In the four years since he started, Justin Lebo has made between 150 and 200 bikes and given them all away. He has been careful to leave time for his homework, his friends, his coin collection, his new interest in marine biology, and of course his own bikes.

Reporters and interviewers have asked Justin Lebo the same question over and over: “Why do you do it?” The question seems to make him uncomfortable. It’s as if they want him to say what a great person he is. Their stories always make him seem perfect, which he knows he isn’t. “Sure it’s nice of me to make the bikes,” he says, “because I don’t have to. But I want to. In part, I do it for myself. I don’t think you can ever really do anything to help anybody else if it doesn’t make you happy.

“Once I overheard a kid who got one of my bikes say, ‘A bike is like a book; it opens up a whole new world.’ That’s how I feel, too. It made me happy to know that kid felt that way. That’s why I do it.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

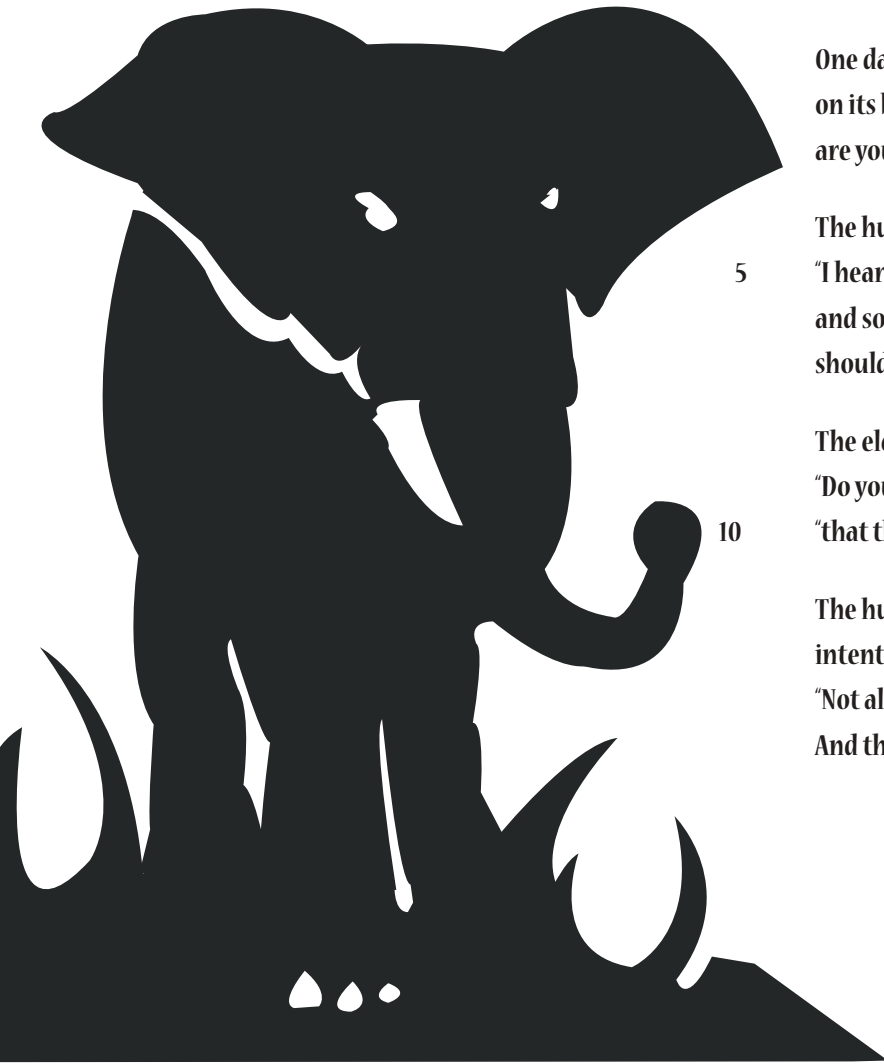
Phillip Hoose writes books, essays, stories, and articles. He has written on a wide variety of subjects, including stories about endangered species, a perfect World Series game, and a championship basketball team. He wrote one of his most popular books, *Hey, Little Ant*, with his daughter Hannah, who was only nine years old at the time. Mr. Hoose works for an organization dedicated to protecting the habitats of endangered species. He lives in Portland, Maine where, in addition to writing books, he writes and performs his own songs.





HOLDING UP THE SKY

A TALE FROM CHINA



One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying on its back with its tiny feet up in the air. "What are you doing?" asked the elephant.

5

The hummingbird replied,
"I heard that the sky might fall today,
and so I am ready to help hold it up,
should it fall."

10

The elephant laughed cruelly.
"Do you really think," he said,
"that those tiny feet could help hold up the sky?"

The hummingbird kept his feet up in the air,
intent on his purpose, as he replied,
"Not alone. But each must do what he can.
And this is what I can do."



Poetry shares big ideas

Studying the Selection

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Who gained more from the bicycle project—Justin or the boys?

QUICK REVIEW

1. What did Justin look for at garage sales?
2. What did Justin do with the junkers he brought home?
3. How did Justin collect enough bicycles and money for this project?
4. To whom did Justin donate twenty-one bikes?

FOCUS

5. Why was freedom an important concept in this story?
6. Write at least two sentences describing some event in the story from the point of view of one of the following individuals: Mel, Mom, or the director of the Kilbarchan Home for Boys.

CREATING AND WRITING

7. Everyone has their own unique combination of talents. Write about how you can contribute to individuals and groups in your community. You may write about your past involvement in a project or an idea you have for the future.
8. Write about a group of students who raise money to help needy children attend summer camp. Include details about the campaign. Describe the feelings about the project from the point of view of the students and of the needy children.
9. Think of a creative way to make a model bicycle. You can use any material such as pipe cleaners or aluminum foil. Speak to your teacher about which materials you would like to use. When your model is complete, write a meaningful slogan on it, such as, "Giving is a cycle."

3

Unit 3

wrap-up

head, hands, heart

ACTIVITY ONE

Be a Model Character

1. Choose any *main* character from the stories in this unit.
2. Write a list of all the details in the story about the character's dress, hobbies, and personality traits.
3. Using materials provided by your teacher, design pictures or objects that represent the character you have chosen.

For example, if your character has a big heart, draw and cut out a "big heart." Let us say you chose Justin Lebo; your objects might include a wrench or a toy bike. Place the four or five objects you have chosen onto an upturned shoe box or some similar platform. Attach a sign that tells which character you have chosen. Write a little explanation of each object in your display onto a piece of paper. Glue the paper to the side of the box.



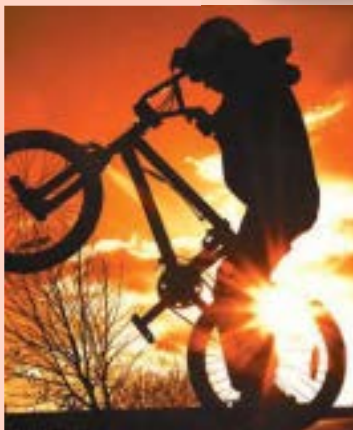
*Eddie,
Incorporated*

Heatwave!



The Wright Brothers

*The Imperfect/
Perfect Book
Report*



Justin Lebo



ACTIVITY TWO

The Same Game

1. For this activity, you may choose any major or minor character from the stories in this unit.
2. Choose a character that you are the most like.
3. List the ways that you are like the character. Include things like the way you look, your personality, and your favorite hobbies and sports activities. Compare the way you feel about school and the subjects you like most and least.
4. You may also list some differences.
5. Tell the class in an interesting and clear speaking voice how you are most like the character you have chosen.



B

wrap-up

continued

Activity Three

1. For this activity, you will work in groups of two or three.
2. Your job is to take one character from Unit Three and place him or her in a different story in Unit Three. How will the character react? How will the others feel? Will this character help solve a problem or will the character cause new problems? Does your character become friendly with the other characters in the story? What information or insight can this character share with the others in the story?


ACTIVITY FOUR

Characters change and learn over the course of a story. Choose a character from one of the stories in this unit and write a paragraph about how the character changed from the beginning to the end of the story. What caused the character to change?

- Was it some event?
- The influence of another character?
- A sudden understanding?
- Growing older?
- A combination of these or other things?
- Did the character change for the better or the worse?



A Change of Place

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3. Think through your choice of story and character before you make your decision. Discuss various possibilities with your classmates. Consider, for example, placing one of the Wright brothers into *Heatwave!* or making Eddie a classmate of Cricket and Zoe.
 4. Using the answers you have given for the questions in #2, write a small play. You will have to invent a situation that is similar to one in the story you have chosen. Then, write an interesting dialogue for the story's characters and the character you have added to the story. Don't be afraid to be serious, mysterious, or funny!



