

Name: _____

Finding main idea

Use the story details to help you make decisions about the characters.

The Whistle

On his seventh birthday, Ben's 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, Ben. I cannot give you any more. So you must be careful not to spend these foolishly."

The little fellow ran into the street. He heard the pennies jingle in his pocket. How rich he was! As Ben 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?

If he had been the only child in the family, things might have been different. But there were fourteen boys and girls older than he, and two little sisters who were younger. What a big family it was! And the father was a poor man. No wonder the lad had never owned a toy.

He had not gone far when he met a larger boy, who was blowing a whistle. "I wish I had that whistle," he said. The big boy looked at him and blew it again. Oh, what a pretty sound it made! "I have some pennies," said Ben. 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 bargain," said the boy; and he gave the whistle to Ben, and took the pennies. Little Ben was very happy; for he was only seven years old. He ran home as fast as he could, blowing the whistle as he ran.

(Source: 'Fifty Famous People' by James Baldwin)

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Questions

1. Why did Ben's mother gave him the pennies?

2. What did his mother tell him to do with the money?

3. Why did the boy sell his whistle to Ben?

4. Do you think Ben regretted buying the whistle? Why?

5. Why do you think Ben's mom could only give him the pennies that one time?
