

The Number He Can Sign

Facilitator note: The skill is holding a standard at the unverifiable point, and the story's frame is the count nobody can audit. Keep the stakes exact: real sponsor money moves on Lipa's word, and the fund is a GOOD destination - the story is careful that a good cause does not launder a bad count. Do not teach "rules are rules" - Lipa is not following a posted rule; no rule says midnight skimmed pages don't count; he BUILDS the standard at the exact spot where no one could check, which is why it is his. Do not let the discussion become "everyone cheats when unchecked" - nobody else in the story cheats; Heshel is honest, and his response is self-examination, not exposure. The teacher affirms the act by putting the number up as written; he never ranks Lipa above other boys. Students are not asked to confess real corner-cutting; Activity 7 uses a made-up case. If a student privately recognizes an unverifiable number of her own, the hoped-for outcome is a quiet correction and a word with a parent - not a public disclosure.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: The teacher can add up the sheet, not check the reading. The sponsors can check what they pledged, not the pages. Heshel can check the chart, not the chapters. Every verification runs out at the same place - the person turning the pages at midnight. What is left is Lipa's own count, which is why the story calls the sheet the real audit: "I can check it. I DID check it." Activity 2: Money: forty pages at his sponsors' rates is a little over nine real dollars to the fund. Chart: claiming them puts first place within reach. The good cause is the strongest temptation because it offers a clean motive to borrow - "it is not even for me" - and Lipa notices the reach: a true fact being used to carry an untrue count. The cause never makes the number real; only the reading does. Activity 3: A rule comes from outside and ends where checking ends. The uncle's friendly question comes from inside the relationship that the number is built on - the pledge is a promise between them. The picture has no sound because Lipa cannot describe a chapter he did not read; the silence is the evidence, clearer than any principle. Activity 4: All 200 claimed: $200 \times 0.25 = 50$ dollars. Only read pages: $160 \times 0.25 = 40$ dollars. Price of the standard: 10 dollars. The arithmetic does not capture that the 10 dollars was never Lipa's to donate - it moves only on a true count - nor that Heshel's second look at his own weeks is worth more than the money. Activity 5: Standards travel because they are habits of counting, not rules of one contest: the same muscle that refuses forty skimmed pages refuses two unearned quiz points. The quiz error could go unnoticed - a teacher grading fifty papers is unlikely to remember one half-answer, though the answer is right there to inspect - and it does not matter because the audit was never external. Lipa's hand goes up before the negotiation starts; that speed is what "traveled" looks like. Activity 6: Drawings vary. Accept any showing only the visible: the tally sheet, the weeks of numbers, the forty struck through with one readable line. Caption from the story, e.g. "One line through it, still readable, because erasing is for hiding and he is not hiding." Activity 7: Answers vary; require three sentences with names. Model: the noticing - Masha realizes the log is in her handwriting and no one walked with her, so the half loop is hers to declare. The picture - Masha imagines her aunt, who pledged the most, asking her to describe the rainy loop, and hears herself go quiet. The correction - Masha crosses out the loop with one readable line and writes the true distance beside it. LIPA row 1 columns 1-4; PAGES row 2 columns 1-5; CHART row 3 columns 1-5; COUNT row 4 columns 1-5; HONEST row 5 columns 1-6; POSTED row 6 columns 1-6; STANDARD row 7 columns 1-8; NUMBER row 8 columns 1-6