

Make-a-Wish, the story of Rick Gunn By Sheila Stone Dill

While he pedals his Haverly hand-built steel-lugged touring bike around the world for Make-A-Wish, Rick Gunn has his own wishes: He appreciates every moment of the incredible gift called life no matter what it brings and he believes in living one's dreams despite one's fears. His goal is to cover 20,000 miles in dozens of countries in two years.

Rick is taking this trip to honor his mom, Carol Ann Gunn, who died when he was only eighteen. They had traveled to Europe—because she wanted to see the world before she died. She had degenerative kidney disease and Rick had spent much of his youth with her in hospitals. When the family finally reached their destination, they had to turn around and return home because she became very ill. She died right after that.

Rick became a news photographer for the *Tahoe Tribune*, and later, the *Nevada Appeal*. Along the way his passion grew for bike riding. He took trips around the United States to document our cities, our citizens, and our countryside. He said that when he turned forty, he realized he wanted to spend the second half of his life touring the world. He needed financial support to do this for two years. He also wanted a way for people to contribute not just to him but to a charity to help others. Rick chose Make-A-Wish, partly because of his mom, and partly because they grant wishes to kids with life-threatening medical conditions. In El Dorado county alone—home to Tahoe-- thirty kids have had their wishes granted.

So Rick packed his oversized bike bags with a tent, sleeping bag, a bare-bones wardrobe, extra bike parts, a Canon digital camera with 3 lenses and 4 media cards, a laptop, and a tiny stove. He also included a Snowpeak titanium French press and Fast Freddie Turbo Blend coffee. There were 240 Clifbars and an Ipod with Spanish, Russian, German, and French lessons stuffed in those bags, too.

Rick's itinerary includes Europe, Turkey, China, Tibet, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand. He traveled across Uzbekistan, Borneo, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand. He has photographed people, places, marketplaces, shrines, temples, and hospitals. Many of the photos are posted on the *NevadaAppeal.com* website, and the link, Where in the World is Rick Gunn ?

You'll see people dying from AIDS; kids playing soccer, and the Gunn Clan Museum and castle ruins in Scotland. Rick photographed the removal of mines and bombs from former war zones in Vietnam. He pictured the people who were severely injured and later fitted with new limbs. Everywhere he shows people living with poverty, illness, or death. He shows how 63% of the rest of the world feeds themselves from the earth. His journals cover the profound day-to-day existence and people he met along the way. It reads like a great history book.

Rick had arranged very few places to stay before he made the trip. He sometimes slept in fields or hostels, or with hospitable people he met along the way. These were places he could eat and rest, repair his equipment, or just spread the word about Make-a-Wish to others. Friends would occasionally join him for a few days. Once he met up with his father.

He has had plenty of adventures along the way to write about. Once he was rescued by Muslim clerics in China. Yaks charged him in Nepal. A monkey bit him in Indonesia. He was attacked by leeches in Malaysia, and robbed at gunpoint in Sri Lanka.

Rick reflects, "I think stability is really a state of mind. I have my 14 years of work experience and 2 years on the road won't take that away. I still have my house. But I'll gain something most people will never see."

Students' Constructed Response question:

This passage is about Rick Gunn and his travels.

- Name the main reason Rick Gunn gives for traveling the world on his bicycle;
- Identify three hardships that Rick has encountered in his travels;
- What is the theme of the passage?

Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Rubric for this question:

Score Point	Expectations
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student's response demonstrates understanding of the reading.• The student's response addresses all parts of the question.• The student's response includes enough related details to support the answer.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student's response demonstrates understanding of the reading.• The student's response addresses only part of the question.• The student's response includes some details to support the answer.• The student's response may include details that do not support the answer.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student's response demonstrates a limited understanding of the reading.• The student's response includes few details to support the answer.• The student's response includes unrelated and inaccurate details.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student's response is incorrect.

Constructed Response – Rick Gunn and his Travels

Here are nine 7th grader's responses. Which would do best when being scored? How could the others be improved to receive higher marks?

- a. He wants to spread the word about Make-a-wish also because he wants to help people around the world.
- b. One hardship he's suffered is that he was attacked by leeches, another was that he was robbed at gunpoint, finally he was bitten by a monkey.
- c. The theme is to care for others.

- a. The main reason why Rick Gunn gives for traveling the world on his bicycle is to honor his mom.
- b. Three hardships that Rick has encountered in his travels are: being robbed at gunpoint in Siri Lanka, being attacked by leaches in Malaysia, and yaks charged him in Nepal. Those are three hardships that Rich encountered in his travels.
- c. The theme of the passage is Recognition because the story tells about what he has done and is pretty much recognizing Rick Gunn for his actions.

- A. The main reason Rick Gunn traveled the world on bicycle was because he wanted to honor his mom.
- B. Three hardships Rick Gunn encountered on his trips were, Being robbed at gunpoint, then the leeches that attacked him, lastly being bittin by a monkey.
- C. The theme is Adventure because he's riding around the world on a bicycle.

- A. The main reason Rick travels the world on a bike, is for a charity called Make-A-Wish.
- B. Three hardships or problems that Rick has encountered on his trips are he has been robbed at gunpoint, he was attacked by leeches and he was bitten by a monkey.
- C. The theme was honoring Someone because Rick is touring the world for a charity so that kids with serious illnesses can live their dream because that is what his mom wanted.

- A. To help the Make-a-wish foundation to help kids so they don't suffer like his mom.
- B. He was bitten by a monkey, attached by leaches, and Robed at gun point
- C. The story of a man who did an incredible thing.

Constructed Response – Rick Gunn and his Travels

Here are nine 7th grader's responses. Which would do best when being scored? How could the others be improved to receive higher marks?

A = for his mom and others. Like dying kids. From Make-A-Wish foundation

B = He has been Robbed at gunpoint, attacked by leeches and bitten by a monkey

C = The theme seems like a biography. Sheila (The Author) is writing about someone else.

A The main reason why Rick Gunn travels the world on his bicycle is to honor his mom that died when Rick was eighteen and she wanted to see the world before she died.

B. Three hardships that Rick has ran into in his travels are a monkey bit him, he was attacked by leeches, and was robbed at gun point.

C. I think the theme of the passage is honoring someone because in this passage Rick goes through many problems while traveling the world and seeing its wonders just to honor and live out his mother's life dream for her.

A – The main reason Rick Gunn travels the world on his bicycle is because he wanted to honor his mom. She had a kidney disease and wanted to see the world before she died.

B - Three hardships Rick encountered were:

- a monkey bit him in Indonesia
- leeches attacked him Malaysia.
- he was robbed gunpoint in Sri Lanka.

C – The theme of the passage is adventure because he travels around the world and encounters many harsh problems, but gets past it to achieve his goal.

a. The main reason Rick Gunn travels the world on his bike is because he does it in memory of his mother, who died when he was only eighteen.

b. Three hard ships Rick has encountered are; He was bit by a monkey in Indonesia, Robbed at gun point in Siri lanka, and attacked by leeches in Malaysia.

C I think the theme of this Passage is Probably giving. I think this because it is Kind of based on the Make-A-wish foundation. He can help people and discover new things.