

Name:

COMPLETE BOTH A NEW OPTION ON THE CHOICE BOARD AND THE QUESTIONS AT THE END.

- Summarize main ideas and label them MI, then underline their supporting details.
- Circle words you do not know or key words (the most important words for this article's topic) and use context clues to define them
- Connect it to the unit we are studying using evidence from the text
- Complete the task at the end of the article (if applicable)



“A”oW3: “The Day I Threw the Trivia Bowl” by Robert Siegel

I have a confession to make: I threw the Trivia Bowl.

The year was 1988. The place, eleventh grade.

In 1988, as an academically advanced (read: geeky) sixteen-year-old, my primary objective in life was the maintenance of my low profile among classmates. I did not want to stick out in any way, especially for anything that had even the faintest whiff of dorkery.

Problem was, I happened to be the captain of a formidable four-man Trivia Bowl team that was to represent the school at the countywide Trivia Bowl competition. For a boy prone to nightmares of academic achievement-related mockery, this was not good.

The night before the Trivia Bowl, I was freaking. I imagined that if we won, they would proudly announce it over the intercom to the entire school during homeroom. This is what they did whenever someone did something notable. I imagined all the kids pointing and laughing at the trivia dork. This prospect terrified me beyond words.

And yet, another part of me desperately wanted to win the Trivia Bowl. I loved trivia and, even more, I loved winning at stuff. It was a terrible dilemma.

The day of the competition comes. We burst out of the gate strongly. What is the capital of Nepal? Kathmandu. What is the largest animal that has ever lived? The blue whale. By the end of the first round, we were in second place and, thanks to a furious late run, had momentum squarely on our side. I was excited, but all the while in the back of my mind, I was imagining that dreaded homeroom announcement.

Things go even better (or worse) in Round Two. We take the lead. As the competition heads toward the finish, it becomes clear that it's a two-team race. Us versus our hated rivals from Massapequa. We go back and forth, trading blows like Foreman and Ali.

It all comes down to one question. If we get it right, we win; if we miss, they have the chance to answer for the win.

"Who shot Robert F. Kennedy?"

Uh-oh. I know it.

No one else on my team knows. They all look at me expectantly. I am well-known amongst

them as the assassination expert. They assume I will blurt out the answer, which, of course, is Sirhan B. Sirhan. I hem and haw. What's going on? they are clearly wondering. Rob doesn't know? After what seems like an eternity, I give my answer:

"Jack Ruby?"

"I'm sorry, that's not correct."

Massapequa pounces and gets it right. My teammates and I watch as they hold aloft the 1988 Trivia Bowl trophy in sweet victory.

The whole ride home, I wrestled with my decision to blow the Trivia Bowl. I felt terrible about what I did, but at least I would avoid homeroom humiliation. Right?

Wrong. The next morning in homeroom:

"Congratulations to eleventh-graders Robert Siegel, Mark Roth, Adam Frankel, and Dan Eckert for their valiant effort yesterday in the countywide Trivia Bowl competition, in which they placed second."

Not only was I a dork, I was a losing dork.

The moral of the story is, if you're ever in a Trivia Bowl, don't throw it. Either way, they're gonna announce it in homeroom, so you might as well win.

Questions

1. What is the **author's purpose** for using parentheses () in the following sentence: "Things go even better (or worse) in Round Two."
2. What is **ironic** about the narrator's dilemma?
3. What could you **infer** about the narrator's view of himself based on this quote? "In 1988, as an academically advanced (read: geeky) sixteen-year-old, my primary objective in life was the maintenance of my low profile among classmates."