

CASE 3

The Paycheck

Rodney, a boy in Ms. Tollefson's kindergarten class, has volunteered to stay after school to help clean up after a messy class art project. As he walks by Ms. Tollefson's desk, he notices her monthly paycheck lying beside her purse.

"Is that a check?" Rodney asks.

"Why, yes, it is," Ms. Tollefson replies, smiling.

"It looks just like the ones my mom and dad bring home all the time."

"Well, that's because your mom and dad both work for the city. I work for the city, too, so I get the same kind of check that they do."

Rodney is shocked, "You have a **job??!!**"

"Yes, of course," says Ms. Tollefson.

"Well, where do you work?"

"I work **here**. My job is teaching you children."

"You get paid for being here? I thought you were just here 'cause you love us."

"Well, I do love all of you. But I also get paid to work, just like your mom and dad get paid to work. Just like your parents, I need money to pay for things like food, medicine, and clothes."

"No, you don't. Teachers don't need money. When you're in this building you always get food from the cafeteria where we get our morning snacks, and you have clothes everyday 'cause you wear them. In fact, all you have to do is go over to that closet," he points to a small closet in the back of the room, "and grab a new outfit."

"Rodney, I keep my clothes at home just like you do."

"You have a home? I didn't know teachers left the building."

"You thought I **slept** here?"

"Well, actually I never thought about you sleeping. I just thought that this was your home."

"No. I sleep-live, actually-in a house just like you do. As a matter of fact, my house is just a few blocks from yours. You may even show up at my doorstep when you go trick-or-treating for Halloween tomorrow night."

"I think you're teasing me, Ms. Tollefson. Teachers don't live in houses. Teachers belong at school."

"Can't I be other things besides a teacher, Rodney? For example, did you know that I go skiing every weekend in the winter.7 So I'm a skier as well as a teacher. See, here's a picture of me skiing at Winter Park."

"You can't fool me, Ms. Tollefson," Rodney responds cheerfully as he skips out the door. "I know you're just a teacher."

"Happy Halloween!" yells Ms. Tollefson.

Rodney pokes his head back inside the classroom. "I knew it! You were trying to trick me 'cause it's Halloween.1" Laughing, he runs down the hall before his teacher can reply.

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Possible questions for "The Paycheck":

1. From the perspective of Piaget's theory, what evidence of preoperational reasoning does Rodney exhibit?

2. How might we explain Rodney's behavior from an information processing perspective?

3. Transductive reasoning is making a mental leap from one specific thing to another, such as identifying one event as the cause of another simply because the two events occur close together in time. When did Rodney exhibit transductive reasoning?