

1- ONL - The Language of Fishermen

© Trevor Bearance (2025) **One Native Life** NAME _____

(1) What is a “grease monkey”? (Use a search engine if you have to.)

_____.

(2) What does it mean to “chain smoke”? (Search engine?)

_____.

(3) If someone is “Ukrainian Canadian” what does this mean? It means that Joe’s ancestors recently came from _____, a country in Eastern Europe, and that Joe identifies as _____ in his nationality and culture. He also likely understands and speaks some of the _____ language he had picked up from his parents and family.

(4) Richard was born in 1955, so he was six years old in _____. Joe told stories about life during wartime. What war do you think Joe had lived through if he was now a Ukrainian Canadian? _____.

(5) Maybe the troubles and upheaval Joe had experienced during that war helped him see the “_____ in me from the first moment, the _____” that he did what he could to make disappear.

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(6) Joe had children of his own, but he took only Richard fishing early on the morning of those holidays. Maybe his other children would have liked to come too. But it seems Joe recognized Richard needed something special just for him. Do you agree? YES or NO. (Circle)

(7) Ukrainians, like other East European peoples, like to eat

_____.

(8) In what ways did Joe give respect to Richard as they set out fishing? _____

_____.

(9) Did Joe treat Richard like he was just another six year-old Native boy (who didn't know anything or matter as much) in foster care in a "White" home? YES or NO. (Circle)

(10) A President of the United States a long time ago, named Calvin Coolidge, was a man of few words but a very good fisherman. When asked by a journalist what the secret of his success as a fisherman was, Mr. Coolidge replied "It's in how you keep your mouth." "What does that mean, sir?" "Shut." Why do you think fishers are known to be quiet while fishing?

_____.

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(We used to call people who fished “fishermen” even if sometimes they were women. So now we use “fishers” instead of “fishermen” or “fisherwomen.”)

(11) What is another name for “jackfish”? _____.
(Google)

(12) If Joe’s family had depended upon catching that big jackfish to have enough to eat, do you think he would have agreed so easily to returning it to the water? YES or NO. (Circle)

(13) In other words, “fishing” for Joe and Richard was about a lot more than catching fish to eat. TRUE or FALSE. (Circle)

(14) Richard and Joe had gained such great respect for the mighty jackfish that had put up such a great fight that they thought it better to leave it alive in the lake than frying in a pan, to be eaten like any other fish. TRUE or FALSE. (Circle)

(15) Richard knew he had earned Joe’s respect. “I could see it in _____ at me when we were on the water, like an _____, like a _____, like a _____.”

(16) Richard believes that Joe understood that Richard, especially because he was Ojibway, needed a “_____ to feel _____, _____, and _____.

(17) Do you think this was true for Joe, Ukrainian Canadian, too? YES or NO. (Circle)

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(18) Joe saw that young Richard had things in him he could not express or put in words. So he introduced the boy to the “language of fishermen” as a beginning. Might we say that Richard spent the rest of his life as a writer trying to get better at putting those things into words? YES or NO. (Circle)

(19) What does Richard believe is the “one basic human right” we all have? _____.

(20) Was Richard still living with the Tacknyk’s when Joe died of cancer? YES or NO. (Circle)

(21) Do you think Joe Tacknyk, Ukrainian mechanic in Kenora, Ontario ever expected he would become a hero to a young Native boy? YES or NO. (Circle)

(22) At a critical time, Joe Tacknyk made a difference in Richard remaining able to feel _____.